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THE ESSENTIALS OF CHRISTIANITY

THE ESSENTIALS OF CHRISTIANITY

By

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"The Bible Message for Modern Manhood"
"The Workingman's Christ," etc.

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TO

The Builders of Tomorrow

WHOSE CHRISTIANITY MUST BE SIMPLE
SPIRITUAL AND BROTHERLY

PREFACE

Our day calls for what is practical in education, efficient in industry, and workable in political and economic relations. In these spheres we are rightfully impatient of beating the air, intolerant of waste and loss of power, and insistent upon modern machinery and new methods. Organization is our watchword, and we want every man at his post.

Religion, like everything else, has caught the temper of the age. Its leaders are imbued with the same spirit as educators, and feel the thrill of business efficiency. They think in vital terms; they discern the need of new view-points; they speak in modern language; they know the power of organization; they want every religious man on the job; they are aware that all our boasted modern science and invention, which are lightening the burdens of work, filling the world with comforts, and providing unheard-of leisure, may do more harm than

good unless men are made better. The world needs better men, and men everywhere need to lay hold upon those forces which enable them to become better.

These facts have been accentuated by the world war. Recently the church has been criticized for a sort of fatalistic remaining in old ruts while the world was rapidly changing. During the war the Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations, and other religious bodies, working at home and abroad, gave a tensely practical turn to religion. The millions of virile young men in cantonments and trenches who were religiously inclined, thought of religion in vital terms. They were eager for reality. They sought a workable and working religion.

Today some are growing negligent of religion and becoming indifferent to its claims. They seem unable to make those readjustments in thought and attitude which the times demand. They rebel against old theology without getting for themselves a new and better theology. They have not outgrown the notion obtaining a generation ago that science and the Bible were in conflict. They are impatient with the

church, failing to understand that institutions always move more slowly than individuals, and that the permanence and usefulness of all institutions are conditioned upon adjustments made by forward-looking people who feel the need of readjustments. Modern knowledge of science seems to have removed God from their world because they still think of God in outgrown terms. Christ fails to be dynamic in their lives because they cannot appropriate him by the theology of other days.

To discard what is outgrown is only half of the modern man's task; the other half is to take on and live in the new, and to be made of worth and service by the new. When some can no longer accept old terms and theologies they throw away their religion and become idlers in the moral and spiritual spheres. Let the modern man, if he feels the need, choose his own terms and make his own theology, but let him not be an idler in living the inspirational life and in helping those about him to a grip on God. Let him deal with vital and essential things in religion and leave other things of more remote consequence for time to adjust.

Preface

This volume is sent forth with the hope that it may help men over difficulties which hold them back from Christian activity and enable them to enlist all their powers in the one task which alone can supply the world's greatest need—the building of better men.

CRAIG S. THOMS.

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II

Faith

FAITH

IN order to understand the full significance of faith and appreciate its power in religion we must first of all tear the word loose from its theological definitions and applications and see it operative in the whole of life.

Faith is usually regarded as a religious term, and the word is most frequently employed in that connection. In other spheres of life, such as home, school, or business, we are more accustomed to the words "belief, confidence, trust," and other like terms. And yet we say: "I have faith in myself," meaning confidence; "I have faith in my friends," meaning trust.

Without hair-splitting definitions, then, let it be noted how large and powerful a factor in all spheres of life is that *set of the soul* which is characterized by faith, confidence, and trust as contrasted with that attitude of mind which is ever insisting upon proof.

The Fundamental Character of Faith

Faith underlies all our knowing processes. For example, we arrive at some conclusion; another insists that we are wrong; but we believe that we are right. That is, we trust the processes of our own minds. Faith in the integrity of our rational processes is the foundation upon which the whole superstructure of knowledge rests. One cannot even prove himself sane to another who challenges his sanity. He may plead that he is like most other people, but the challenger may insist that all are insane but himself. One simply believes in and trusts his own sanity. Upon this basis of faith in the integrity of one's own mental operations all knowledge is built.

Our constantly besetting temptation is to seek proof of things, and were this not the case it would be difficult to see how our reasoning faculty could be exercised and developed. This is its means of growth. But the facts of evolution teach that reason is our baby faculty—the latest born of them all. This baby, reason, will grow to manhood in time, and will doubtless do valiantly when grown; but as yet he is not fully

capable of holding the reins of life. Daily life is guided more by faith than by reason.

Underlying all education is faith in one's unfolding powers. The athlete believes that he can run faster and jump higher tomorrow than he did today. The football squad believe that they can win this year from the team to which they lost last year. By faith the student passes from less difficult to more difficult studies. He believes that he can master untried problems, though there is no possible proof of it beforehand. The graduate goes forth to his chosen work—teaching, engineering, law, medicine, or whatever it may be—believing in his ability to succeed. It is a veritable plunge of faith. He does not and cannot know beforehand that success awaits him. The person full of faith succeeds where the one who lacks faith fails.

The driving power in all wars and in all business is faith. No nation goes to war unless it believes that it can win. No farmer plows and sows who lacks faith in the coming of rain and in the conquest of insect pests. No manufacturing would be done in advance of demand but for faith in markets to take the product. All are aware

that lack of faith in the business world produces panic. In a country like ours, where the bulk of business is done on credit, faith is one of the chief ingredients of business stability. No young man can prove that he will not die in the poorhouse, yet each of us proceeds joyfully with his work in faith that he will be able to acquire a competence for old age.

Our homes are established in faith. What risks we run in marriage! Shall husband and wife be able to get along together? If they waited for demonstration of this fact they would never marry. Shall the husband succeed in business and be able to provide a home? Shall children turn out well? Shall life be spared to old age and happiness strew the long pathway? None can tell. We believe the best, and we proceed joyfully by faith.

Every great enterprise is born, not of knowledge, but of faith. "Find Livingstone." Stanley believed that he could find him, and he did. "Find the North Pole." Peary believed that he could do it, and he succeeded. "Go disciple all nations." The disciples believed that it could be done, and it is being done. Do we know that the

League of Nations will succeed? It cannot be known beforehand. We believe it will succeed. Without that faith it never would be tried.

All scientific knowledge proceeds upon the basis of faith. From his look at the swaying chandelier in the cathedral at Pisa, Galileo believed in the law of the pendulum and proceeded to prove it. By seeing the apple fall, Newton believed in the law of gravitation and demonstrated it mathematically. Darwin and Wallace believed in the evolution of species and spent years gathering facts to prove it. Franklin believed that electricity could be made to do work, and he proceeded to snatch lightning from the clouds. Fulton believed that steam could be made to drive ships, and the oceans are now the highways of the nations. In every laboratory of investigation men are working toward things that they believe in but cannot prove as yet. If faith were destroyed, effort would be paralyzed, and work would cease.

Inventions are the product of faith. Cyrus McCormick believed that he could make a machine to cut and bind grain. By his neighbors he was called lazy, a fool,

and even crazy. His faith saved him. "Darius Green with his flying-machine" was the joke of the author's country-school days. But from generations of men with faith that they could fly, a new and terrible weapon was added to the world war, and a new and important method is being added to the world's transportation system.

Every great forward step in government is prompted by faith. Without the faith of our Pilgrim Fathers the Mayflower would have been unknown to history, the character of this nation would have been very different, and the democratic purposes of the Allies in the world war impossible.

When in the crisis of Colonial history Benjamin Franklin said, "We must all hang together or we shall all hang separately," he expressed a phase of the venture of faith which gave our nation birth.

What fight in life is not a struggle of faith? The young writer receives back from the critical editor manuscript after manuscript, but maintains faith in the success of his next endeavor. A noble man begins a fight to clean up one of the worst wards in Chicago, believing after every defeat that it can be done next time, and

finally it is done, or done in large measure. Faith did it.

Faith blazes the trail of the future. Columbus, with faith as his chief asset, sailed forward to a new continent, and refused to turn back. The builders of our transcontinental railroads believed in the development of our Middle West. By faith they looked forward to the time to which we have now come, when towns, like necklaces, would lie upon the bosom of the prairie, and homes nestle among trees on every hillside and in every valley. On these prairies the early settlers had no idea of living alone. They believed that they were the first of a gathering company, and but for this faith they would not have left their old homes.

The following facts about faith then are evident:

1. Faith is the engine of life and drives life forward when certain knowledge is impossible.

2. Faith is the pioneering faculty of the soul, and attempts and exploits all possibilities.

3. Faith runs risks and blazes the way into the larger unknown.

4. Faith seizes and utilizes opportunities which would be lost if we waited for certain knowledge.

5. Faith is a necessary and dominant power in every field of life.

Faith as Individual Relationship

Faith is the condition of assimilating the best or the worst in others.

Let a youth believe in the life ideals of the "fast young man," and he fairly absorbs him. He admires his manner and dress; he listens eagerly to accounts of his exploits; his judgment is molded by his ideas of morals; he imitates him and grows to be like him. Let a youth, on the contrary, lionize a person of opposite character, and he himself becomes opposite in character. He who admires the industrious man, praises the temperate man, loves the pure man, trusts the just man, and associates with the religious man, will himself take on these qualities. Faith assimilates its object. It is the fountain from which flow admiration, praise, love, trust. It is the condition of agreeable association.

Though a minister preach ever so good

a sermon, only those who have faith in his character are stirred by it. Though a politician plead ever so eloquently for national reform, those who distrust his sincerity are not moved to action. On the contrary, when a speaker whom you trust is stirred with his theme, you also are stirred; you respond to him and are ready to act with him. Faith in him makes you absorb his ideas and also something of his passion and power.

Such facts help us to understand Christ's emphasis on faith. It is the psychic bond which binds us to him; it is our means of assimilating his qualities of character; it is our faculty for rendering his ideas dynamic in us; it is the drawing power which brings him and us into vital association, makes that association agreeable, and renders possible admiration, love, and obedience; it is the channel through which his nature and ours flow together.

It is not surprising, then, that Christ says, if I may paraphrase him somewhat freely: He that believeth on me, though he were spiritually dead, yet shall he become spiritually alive. He that believeth on the Son is awakened into spiritual life; he that

believeth not the Son cannot find spiritual life. (See John 3 : 16; 5 : 24; 6 : 47; 11 : 25, 26.) If you have faith as a grain of mustard-seed, things shall be possible to you which otherwise are impossible; you shall have power which may be likened to plucking a mountain out of its place and casting it into the sea. (Matt. 21 : 21.)

Faith is not a mystical thing for religious use only. It functions the same everywhere between individuals. When exercised toward Christ, it joins us to Christ; Christ lives in us and we in him; our characters become assimilated to his; we lay hold upon his power, and he works through us.

Faith is the leverage under all efforts to help men and improve society. In one of his lectures Dr. P. S. Henson used to tell that, while hastening to a train one day in Chicago, he slipped a package into a postal box without first putting stamps on it. He had no time to wait for the postman, so, calling a little ragged newsboy from across the street, he told him his predicament. "Here are twenty-five stamps for the postage," he said, "and here is money to buy all your papers, and you may have

them to sell again. You stand here and wait for the postman, and have him put the stamps on the package."

"Sure, I'll do it," said the lad.

When Doctor Henson was a block away he looked back, and there the boy stood as though he owned the city, straight as a Northern pine. The package reached its destination safely, and every one of the twenty-five stamps was on it. By putting faith in boys we make men out of them. None of us rise to our best unless we are trusted.

Of this fact Christ's conduct is a luminous example. He put faith in the unworthy, and they were transformed as by a healing touch. He forgave the sinful and sent them away to sin no more, and they would have died for him. He trusted every one of the twelve disciples, and those who failed him were heart-broken. Peter denied him, but alone in the darkness he wept bitter tears of repentance. Judas betrayed him, but, unable to live with conscious betrayal in his heart, he brought back the blood-money and went and hanged himself. Nothing brings out the good in one like being trusted.

Only those who believe in their fellow men work for their betterment. Faith gives the push for work. We believe that we can keep the young from going wrong; we believe that we can get bad people to change their ways; we believe that we can improve social and economic conditions; we believe that international relations can be made more brotherly; we believe that Christ has power to uplift men and society; we believe that the kingdom of Christ is gradually being established in the world, that his power in men's lives is increasing, and that the kingdom of this world will ultimately become "the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ" (Rev. 11 : 15). Apart from such faith there would be no effort to uplift society. Faith is the dynamic that is doing the work of the world.

Faith and Knowledge

Faith and knowledge, of course, are never wholly separated. They are different phases of the soul's activity. Just as the old psychology separated the soul into intellect, feelings, and will, so we too often separate faith and knowledge. The newer

psychology affirms that, while it is convenient for study to separate intellect, feelings, and will, as a matter of fact the soul does not act in parts, but as a unit, that every activity of the soul has something of intellect, something of feeling, and something of will. In like manner, it is convenient to speak of faith and knowledge separately; but no act of faith is without some knowledge, and no knowledge proceeds far without the exercise of faith. While faith goes beyond knowledge, knowledge is a buttress to faith. For example, coupled with the chemist's faith that he can achieve certain unknown results is a certain knowledge of chemical facts and laws. Coupled with one's faith in people is a certain knowledge of human nature. Coupled with the faith that leads the farmer to sow this year's crops, is his knowledge of the rains and harvests of former years. Coupled with the student's faith that he can "make good" in college or university, is his knowledge of his own past achievements. Coupled also with our faith in Jesus Christ is our knowledge of his character and work, our observation of lives changed by trusting him, the testimony of

friends to Christ's power in their lives, the great historic transformations wrought by Christianity, the church's world-wide endeavor to better mankind. Though one may not think through these considerations as they are set down here, yet the facts indicated lie in the background of our consciousness and are a support to faith.

It may at times be difficult to tell where faith ends and knowledge begins, and it is not necessary to do so. The important things are that faith gives the push upward in the face of all difficulties; it is the normal attitude of strong souls; it is the achieving and conquering power in life. Midst all our ignorance, and notwithstanding all mysteries and all unsolved problems, it binds us to God and links us to Christ; it keeps us forward-looking and upward-striving; and it makes the personalities in whom we believe, powerful to transform us into their likeness.

Faith as an Attitude

Faith is the optimistic attitude to life. To believe in God, and to trust his justice, love, and guidance, fills one with hope and

courage. To believe that Jesus Christ is sent of God, that he gives spiritual life to men, that he can transform the individual, and that he is guiding the race on its unblazed way to a destined goal, makes one both a forward-looking and a present-working man. To believe in the redeemableness of men, even the worst of them, and in the betterment of social conditions, however hopeless, girds one with power for heroic tasks. To believe in growing goodness in the hearts of men, in the ultimate righting of all wrongs, in man's fundamental love of righteousness, and in the possibility of ultimately perfecting the social order, is to be a worker with God in redeeming the world.

In any undertaking, he who does not believe in possible accomplishment is beaten before he begins. Belief in one's own untried powers sets one to work and develops applied faculties. Belief draws to one the faith and cooperation of others and unites their endeavors with one's own. No one loves a pessimist; no one follows a doubter. To be a leader of men one must be filled with faith that dares attempt the impossible.

Faith in God and in Jesus Christ puts spiritual "pep" into life, gives direction and momentum to every spiritual thought, every moral impulse, every right endeavor. It links with one, and enlists for one, both the power of God and the spiritual power in men.

The spiritual work of the world has been done by men of faith. In that great chapter, the eleventh of Hebrews, the writer gives a catalog of the heroes of faith—Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Gideon, Barak, Jephthah, Samuel, David, and many others, "who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of aliens. . . Others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonments. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And these

all, having received a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect."

This remarkable tribute to the unsubduable power of faith could be duplicated in our Christian era: Paul, the Christian martyr under Roman rule, Savonarola, Luther, Wiclif, Ridley, Latimer, Knox, the Pilgrim Fathers, Carey, Judson, Livingstone, and hosts of others, were all men of unsubduable faith. They "believed where they could not prove." They attempted and achieved the seemingly impossible. Such are always the men who pioneer the way to a larger and better future and usher in conditions of finer social brotherhood and greater economic justice.

Faith and Evolution

Faith is an evolutionary force. From what has been said, it is evident that faith is a necessary factor in social progress. The forces of social evolution are, among others, the human faculties—conscience, will, reason, feeling (love, hate, envy, jealousy, sympathy), faith, etc. Among these forces the

most outstanding is faith. As previously stated, it is the pioneering force; it is like the needle which points the direction for the mariner; it roughly locates the next camp on the journey of social progress, and bids humanity gird up its loins for the forward march; it indicates the direction of social betterment, and summons all the power in God and man for achievement.

It has been remarked in another connection that in biological evolution there is found in each species, as it wanes, rough indications or prophecies of what the next species is to be like, and thus an upward course of development is traceable from species to species. A similar fact is observable in social evolution. Each century holds prophecies of the next century. Faith is the prophet. What man today believes he can do, he does tomorrow; what he believes this century that society can become, it becomes next century. Today's faith indicates tomorrow's achievement. Yesterday man believed that he could fly; today he is flying. Centuries ago man believed that steam could be made to do work; today it is driving factories and mills, hauling trains, and propelling ships. A generation ago man

believed that electricity could be made to become his servant; today undersea cables, underground and overhead wires, and the very atmosphere the world around, are vibrant with hurrying messages. Not long ago nations believed that kings were of divine appointment; today democracy is possessing the world. Yesterday the many believed that might made right, both governmentally and economically; today the whole world, with few exceptions, believes that every person, no matter how weak and insignificant, has right to worthful life; and that every nation, however small and unable to protect itself, has the right to work out its own destiny in its own place. Not many centuries ago most Christians believed that Christ came to save a few out of a fast perishing world; today the dominant conception of Christian thinkers is that he came to reconstruct human society and to make this world a fit place to live in. They regard the hereafter as safe for all who do their appointed task here. They are concerned with the betterment of human relations, the remaking of social conditions, the righting of economic wrongs, the bringing of heaven down to earth, the transforming

of the kingdoms of this world into the kingdom of our Lord.

Thus it is clear that faith is the mightiest force in the process of social evolution; it blazes the trail to the higher unknown. Working with the other social forces, it leads the way to the

> Far-off divine event
> To which the whole creation moves.

The outworking of the social process always goes beyond our faith. The Old Testament prophets, for the most part, looked to Jerusalem as the capital of the world, with the Hebrews as the dominant people and their rule as national. All, of course, was conditioned upon righteousness. But the facts, as unfolded in history, burst the bounds of their vision, overflowed their limited hopes, and swept away the barriers of their restricted faith. Christ established a more glorious kingdom than John the Baptist looked forward to, notwithstanding that John was his prophet and forerunner. The Pilgrim Fathers laid the foundation of a freedom that transcended their fairest dreams. Carey, Judson, Moffat, and Livingstone kindled a missionary zeal in the

world that has outflamed their highest expectations, and taken a social and economic breadth far beyond their vision. We believe that the world war, notwithstanding all its horrors, will work great good. Many items could even now be pointed out. But if history repeats itself—always with a difference—our feeble faith gives but faintest intimation of the world-wide changes that will ensue, and the multiple unseen blessings that will follow. The need and the duty of the hour is faith. It gives courage to fight, self-sacrifice to spend, patriotism to suffer, and renunciation to die, if need be, in order that better, freer, larger life than has been given to us may be the portion of those who shall come after us.

Our faith is not in dead saints' bones,
  In altars of vain sacrifice;
Nor is it in the stately stones
  That rise in beauty toward the skies.

Our faith is built on living men,
  With singing blood and minds alert;
Strong men, who fall to rise again,
  Who strive and bleed with courage girt.

We would not spurn the ancient lore,
  The prophet's word or psalmist's prayer;

But, lo! our Leader goes before,
Tomorrow's battles to prepare.

Our faith is in a Christ who walks
With men today, in street and mart;
Who gives good cheer, who thinks and talks
With those who seek him with the heart.

—*Thomas Curtis Clark, "The Faith of Christ's Freemen."*

II

God

GOD

ALL knowledge, even of common things, is partial; we are learners. Problems bristle everywhere. How is it that two gases, hydrogen and oxygen, make water? Is there as yet no answer to the agelong query, Why does grass make wool on a sheep, hair on a cow, bristles on a pig, and feathers on a chicken? Why does food sustain life? Why does heat make vegetation grow, and frost retard its growing? Why do we love some people and not others? Why is everybody not good? Why do we so often want to do what reason tells us we should not do?

To some of these questions we might venture answers, but other questions would push the problems still farther back. There is no ultimate explanation. We are compelled to stop with a simple statement of fact—that things are so and so, that they do occur. Just as the telescope, while bringing distant stars into clear view, reveals

others dimly seen in the far distance, so every increment of knowledge, while revealing more facts, also makes apparent more mysteries.

On the threshold of our study of God it is needful to recognize that the acquiring of knowledge is a continuous process. We but stultify ourselves, and often close the door of our minds, by insisting upon ultimate solutions to our problems. It is well, of course, to solve all possible problems; but in our thought of God it is fundamental to recognize the magnitude of the task involved when we seek to go beyond an every-day working knowledge and plunge into the field of philosophy. Our knowledge, both of the individual and of the race, is a growth. How much more our knowledge of God!

A man's conception of God is very different from a child's conception; and the twentieth-century conception is vastly different from the first-century conception. Early races worshiped fetishes. They conceived of powers, both malignant and beneficent, in sticks, stones, trinkets, birds, etc. Later races peopled hills, valleys, lakes, streams, woods, fields, springs, and other

places, with spirits. Still other races worshiped sun, moon, and stars—"all the hosts of heaven." Greeks, Romans, and other peoples, worshiped ancestral spirits. By most races gods were represented by, or located in, images made by men's hands. American Indians worshiped the Great Spirit—not a poor conception of God, were it divorced from numerous gross superstitions. The early Hebrews worshiped Jehovah, but as the God of the Hebrews only, while they believed in Isis and Osiris as gods of the Egyptians, and the sun-god and moon-god as gods of the Babylonians. Thus the knowing of God is a long, slow process. It was a great step forward when Hebrew prophets declared that the gods of the nations were idols, and that Jehovah was the God of the whole world. (1 Chron. 16 : 26.) Only in comparatively recent times has God been worshiped as righteous, and as demanding righteousness in his worshipers. Heathen gods, as we call them, had human passions—jealousy, hate, cruelty, envy, lust, vindictiveness, etc. Much heathen worship was due to fear. It sought to placate the anger of the gods and to ward off their cruelty. Worship on "the

high places," to which the Hebrews often turned aside, was accompanied with licentious orgies. (Ezek. 16 : 29-39.) Even the Hebrews, spiritually the most highly endowed, and religiously the best trained of all races, found the acquisition of the knowledge of God both a gradual and a slow process. Of this fact the Old Testament itself bears eloquent testimony.

Some may object that this simply makes God a big man, predicating of him human qualities raised to the highest degree. This is true, and ought to be true. It is inevitable from the nature of our thought processes. We must interpret God in terms of experience. No other terms are available to us, for we cannot understand any other. If we should make God only *force,* the content of the idea would necessarily be our experience of force raised to the highest power; if law, our experience of law imagined as perfect; if personality, our experience of persons raised to the degree of limitless perfection.

Naturally, and all but inevitably, we think of God as a person. We cannot think of him as less than ourselves; we think, sympathize, love, regard right and wrong, value

truth and justice, etc. The best we can do is to predicate of God in absolute degree the qualities we know in ourselves.

Do we, then, know God in fact? and do we know him as he is? We know him as we know all persons, and by the same means.

We see each other's bodies, but cannot see each other's spirits; yet we know each other's thoughts, purposes, and acts. Likewise, we see the world in which we live, and something of the universe which surrounds it, and by these we come to know something of God's thoughts, purposes, and acts.

We accept each other as acquaintances, we become friends, we love each other, we have fellowship together. The relation is one between spirit and spirit. We may refuse acquaintance and turn from each other if we will, thus making it impossible to know each other in experience, or we can turn gladly toward each other and know each other in experience ever more fully.

In like manner we may know God in experience. If we turn toward him in attitude of soul, if we accept and cultivate his acquaintance, there come knowledge of him, love for him, fellowship, confidence, and

trust, the same as in our acquaintance with individuals.

It thus becomes evident why the knowing of God is a gradual process. A people of low ethical standards like the Assyrians, for example, could not conceive of a very ethical God. When the highest ethics of a people is "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth," their god will be one of vengeance. But when ethics have advanced to love of enemies, the god will be one of love and mercy. In a word, man's conception of the character of God advances with advancement in human ethics. It is current ethics idealized. As ethics rise from lower to higher, led upward by the Spirit of God working in the hearts of men, man's conception of God unfolds. Erroneous conceptions of God drop off as false ideas of character and conduct are left behind. Worthier conceptions supplant them as more ethical character develops.

This long, tedious racial process of coming to the knowledge of God is both natural and inevitable. It could not be otherwise, not because God cannot reveal himself to men, but because men, from their very nature, cannot apprehend, except gradually,

the knowledge of God. The race grows in capacity like a child. Higher mathematics are not taught in the kindergarten, not because the instructor cannot teach them, but because children are not mature enough to understand them. Racial capacity, like individual capacity, grows. To every increase of knowledge there is a "fulness of time," just as there was a fulness of time to the coming of Christ. (Gal. 4 : 4.) Even Christ could not tell his disciples "many things"; the time was not ripe; their experiences were not adequate to enable them to understand. At the close of his ministry he said to them, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now" (John 16 : 12). They could not know the things indicated until they had grown up to them and been persuaded of them through experience. Both to the individual and to the race the knowledge of God comes gradually.

This simple fact should make plain to every one that he is destined to live with problems about God, problems that he will never wholly solve. Were one to give his whole time and thought to the matter, he could hope at most to add only his little bit

to the solution of the agelong problems which, in one form or another, have been in the minds of men from the beginning.

The really valuable conception of God is one that moves us to action. Knowledge ignored in action has no significance for experience. It lacks evolutionary dynamic. Instead of helping the race forward it leaves it with an intensified habit of inertia. Neither the individual nor the race can take in any greater knowledge of God than it will live out. Knowing, moreover, as Christ said, comes by doing. The knowledge of God, under the leading of the Spirit, must be literally battered out of experience. "He that willeth to do his will shall know of the teaching" (John 7 : 17).

It becomes apparent, then, that the matter of supreme importance is not to solve all problems about God, but to begin doing God's will as far as one knows it. More light comes by following the light one has.

A Universal Method

This method of knowing is not peculiar to religion. It is the method in all fields of knowledge. An experiment in the chem-

ical laboratory gives us knowledge that we can secure in no other way. There is just one way to learn to swim, and that is to swim; one way to learn music, and that is to practise; one way to learn to farm, and that is to have experience with the soil. To be sure, in all these cases we get help from books and teachers, but the books themselves come from experience. Moreover, all that is learned from books and teachers we take on faith. We do not really know for ourselves until we have lived through the experience. How much can one tell another of love, sorrow, jealousy, or hate? In order to know these passions we must experience them. A lover is thought silly by those who have never been in love, while a little experience is a decided illumination, and brings us to knowledge. Mother-love and father-love can be known only by fathers and mothers. Husband and wife are a constant revelation to each other because they live together and love each other. The extreme depth of either's personality is never sounded by the other. New beauties are revealed daily. New circumstances uncover unsuspected riches of devotion; and the harder the cir-

cumstances the greater is the beauty of character unfolded. In a word, they come to know each other by living together and having experience of each other.

The way to know God is to experience him, to live and work with him, to love him and do his will. This fact Christ recognized when, refusing to answer numerous inquiries, he said to men, " Follow me." In no other way could they know him.

Building Moral Character

It is important to observe that the highest moral character possible at any given time lies in doing God's will as one understands it. We often marvel, and sometimes really shudder, at the savage cruelty of Old Testament wars. Men, women, and children are ruthlessly slain by the Hebrews in battle—the very thing that we have denounced as a stain upon Christian civilization in the world war. Yet from these cruel battles the Hebrews returned rejoicing in Jehovah as the God of battles, never doubting that in their ruthless slaughter they were doing God's will.

These cruel ideas were the ideas of the

age. All nations held them and practised them. Moreover, all nations regarded their gods as going before them in war and giving victory in battle if they were strong enough to do so.

At no time do people rise very far above their age. The particular features which any battle takes on depend on the ideas of the age in which it is fought. Elijah slew with his own hands the four hundred prophets of Baal, and regarded the deed as a great triumph for Jehovah. (1 Kings 18 : 17-40.) We live in an age which condemns persecution for religious beliefs and practices; and such a slaughter for such a purpose, we should regard as fiendish. Samuel condemns Saul unsparingly for not utterly destroying the sheep and cattle of the Amalekites, in addition to the Amalekites themselves, big and little, young and old, men and women. (1 Sam. 15 : 19f.) We should regard the doing of the same things, not only as wanton cruelty, but as a wicked waste of substance. Paul thought that he did God service by persecuting the church. (Acts 26 : 9.)

The important thing is not the *form* of the battle we fight. That is determined by

the ideas of the age, and also, as in Paul's case, by personal ideas. Both sets of ideas change, the first by the progressing age, and the second by the individual's progressing experience. The vitally important matter is that we *consciously fight God's battles as we see them.* These are not the same in any two ages. The Christian centuries, not to go farther back, have seen battles with heathenism, battles over doctrines, reformation battles, slavery battles, temperance battles, and many others. Some battles, of course, are fought out, but others take their places. At the present hour, for example, the Christian emphasis is not upon doctrine but upon ethics and service; not upon being saved in the kingdom of God hereafter, but upon building the kingdom of God here, a kingdom that shall be socially, economically, and internationally righteous. In these present-day problems there are just as real battles as ever were fought from trench and submarine. We fight to bring ourselves to God's will as we see it; and we fight to get God's will, as we see it, done in society.

In thus fighting God's battles, we doubtless are as blind in our way as were the

heroes of the Old Testament in theirs, though on a higher plane. We doubtless make as many mistakes in regard to what God's will is as they did. But in progressive knowledge, as formerly in progressive revelation, man is shut up to just one thing, viz., *to the fighting of God's battles as he sees them.* Men must fight according to their light, and according to the light of their age. This is both the highest possible ethics for the moment, and also the condition of rising to higher ethics in the future. To do less is to lower one's ethical standard and to be untrue to one's age, for it is to turn one's back on God.

The knowledge of God, then, is ever partial, both for the age and for the individual. It comes to both as it is welcomed in experience; and it is experienced by doing God's will according to one's light. Our experience of God is most intense when we consciously fight his battles, both within ourselves and for our generation.

Christ the Revelation of God

The clearest and fullest knowledge of God comes to us, of course, in Jesus Christ.

The author once asked a Christian woman, who sang for a time in a Jewish synagogue, what idea of God the services gave her. She replied that God seemed "so far away" that she could get no "heart-grip," that God seemed to be wholly "intellectualized." Recall in this connection the words of Paul, "But now, in Christ Jesus, ye that once were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ" (Eph. 2 : 13). I presume that we who are accustomed to think of God in terms of Christ little realize how cold and distant God would be to us but for the fact that we habitually think of him through the medium of Christ's sympathetic personality and loving ministry.

Emphasis must here rest upon the fact that Christ is a person, and reveals God's personal qualities. He does not leave us with a God that is simply force or law. He always speaks of God as a person. "He that hath seen me," he says, "hath seen the Father" (John 14 : 9). "I and my Father are one" (John 10 : 30). He speaks of the Father's will, love, and watch-care—all expressive of personality.

Christ reveals God as a *loving* personality. Love is contained in the name Father;

in the teaching that God so loved that he sent Christ; in the parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15 : 11-32); in all Christ's exhortations to prayer; in fact, it suffuses all Christ's teachings and permeates his every attitude.

Christ reveals God as *righteous,* and as demanding righteousness in men. All his teachings about rewards and punishments speak of God's justice. The righteous are rewarded; the wicked are punished. Notable teachings on this point are the parables of Dives and Lazarus (Luke 16 : 19-31) and the Last Judgment (Matt. 25 : 31-46), in which the righteous are gathered on the right hand and the wicked on the left.

Christ reveals God as *forgiving.* He bids his disciples pray, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors." To those who came to him for physical healing he sometimes said, "Thy sins be forgiven thee" (Matt. 9 : 2). And he insisted that God was more willing to forgive us our sins than fathers to forgive their children.

Christ reveals God as having *a peculiarly sympathetic and tender care for men.* This teaching lies in the parables of the Good Shepherd (John 10) and the Prodigal Son

(Luke 15 : 11-32); in such passages as "The very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows" (Luke 12 : 7); in all exhortations to prayer, and in such definite statements as "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him" (Matt. 7 : 11).

Christ reveals God as *hopeful of men.* He made himself the champion of the sinful and, by his sympathy, faith, and love, won them to righteousness. He said that he came, not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance; to heal, not the well, but the sick. (Luke 5 : 31, 32.)

Christ reveals God as *no respecter of persons.* He did not turn away from any class, but plainly said, "For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother" (Mark 3 : 35). He associated with the rich and learned as freely as with the poor and ignorant. He valued man as man, and not for any trappings that man might possess. He insisted that people were no more and no less than what they were at heart. He inveighed

against mere formal worship and parade of righteousness.

Christ revealed God as *yearning and striving to bring men into fellowship with himself*. Thus only could they secure worthful, abounding life. "I am come," he said, "that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10 : 10). He pictured the kingdom of God, which he bade men enter, as a wedding (Matt. 22 : 2-14), a feast (Luke 14 : 16-24), a costly pearl (Matt. 13 : 45, 46), a rich treasure (Matt. 13 : 44), and, above all, as eternal life. (John 3 : 16.)

The Essential Things

Christ does not give us a complete revelation of God, but only such a revelation as man needs and craves, a revelation that awakens man to God's love, makes him aware of God's companionship, and sets him to work with God.

Our scientific and philosophic studies, while displacing nothing of Christ's revelation, have corrected many errors which had accumulated about his teachings. No longer do we think of God as an absentee land-

lord, but rather as an immanent Spirit. No longer do we view the universe as run by self-acting laws, but rather by the immediate activity of divine energy. No longer do we regard the world as created complete at the beginning, but as being in a continuous process of creation. Science and philosophy corroborate John when, in his vision, he hears God saying, "Behold! I make all things new." The heavens and the earth, man and society, are in a continuous process of renewal.

Aside from his relation to man as Father, God has relations to the physical universe, to natural law, to the whole process of creation. About these relations, of course, we may speculate, and we shall doubtless learn more about them as the centuries sweep on. Our philosophy has always been a changing thing. It will continue to change, and, we trust, to improve. We should strive for a progressive philosophy of God, just as we strive for progressive knowledge in all fields of learning. Knowledge of God is not, and should not be, a fixed and finished product, but, on the contrary, *a growing process*. "We know now in part"; but then—more fully.

Christ, however, avoids the philosophical problems which so often trouble us. He does not discuss God's methods in creation, his relation to natural laws, or such theological questions as omnipotence, omnipresence, God's foreknowledge and man's free will, and a hundred other questions that we are curious about. Christ gives us a helpful, working conception of a God that we can live with, work with, love, trust, and obey—a personal, loving, righteous, and forgiving God; a God of sympathy and tender compassion, who is hopeful of man at his worst, and no respecter of persons; a God who looks, not on the outward appearance, but on the heart, and is ever working to bring man to himself that he may bless him, impart himself to him, and bring him into the fulness of joyful, abounding life.

We serve no God whose work is done,
Who rests within his firmament,
But one whose task is but begun,
Who toils today, with power unspent.

—T. C. Clark, "The Faith of Christ's Freemen."

XIII

Christ

CHRIST

A YOUNG man once said to the writer, "God's relation to us would be simple enough if Jesus Christ had just kept out."

This remark indicated, not that he understood God apart from Christ, for he had given the subject little thought, but that the nearer the problem was brought to him the more difficulty he found with it. A landscape is simple enough when far enough away, but the nearer we approach the more diversified are its objects, and the more multiple and intricate their relations. Many things now complex would have remained simple if telescopes and microscopes had not been invented. Christ brings more problems than does God because he brings God near and reveals new relations.

Knowing Christ

It is natural that many should have difficulties in understanding Christ. During a certain period of mental development the

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mind seeks to fathom everything. While varying in different persons, this period, roughly speaking, embraces the years between seventeen and twenty-five. During this time it is of the utmost importance to hold steady, and to realize that the mind simply outgrows some things. As years pass we come upon so much that we cannot fathom, so many things that the ages have worked on and have not fathomed, that we become reconciled to live with mysteries, and are glad to walk by faith where before we demanded sight.

Of one thing we should be certain, that our effort to do the will of Christ is always stronger than our effort to understand Christ. Christ himself says, "He that willeth to do his will, shall know of the teaching" (John 7 : 17). Unwillingness to do Christ's will clouds the mind. It invites and raises difficulties which, but for such unwillingness, faith and love and eagerness to serve would either pierce through or brush aside.

Personality is never fully understood, and Christ is a person. Even an ordinary person is a continuous revelation. The greater one's powers, the less one is understood.

The genius is a puzzle to the rest of us. That is the reason we call him a genius. The term is a cloak for our ignorance. The more of a genius he is, the more of a puzzle he is.

It is common for those who find mysteries in Christ to say, what is self-evident to all, that Christ is *more than a man.* But to say this is to admit ourselves shut out from understanding all that lies in the word "more." Man can understand only what comes within his own experience, or what is analogous thereto. He may, however, have faith in what transcends experience.

Our main difficulty, however, lies, not in the fact that we cannot understand Christ, but rather in our dissatisfaction with theologies about him. No doubt we ought to be dissatisfied with them. Each century has constructed its theology of Christ on the basis of current types of philosophy, government, social practice, and forms of worship. No century could or can do otherwise.

Explanations of Christ have changed from century to century, and ought to change. Christ promises the Holy Spirit

to take of the things of himself and reveal them to men (John 16 : 14); but Christ remains the same; his relations to us do not change. Before Christ came the scribes and Pharisees had him defined, and even had his program arranged. Their hatred of him and opposition to him were due to the fact that he neither fitted their definitions nor would follow their program.

If we had Christ all understood and defined today, he would shatter our definitions and transcend the bounds of our understanding tomorrow. He could not be the leader of human progress unless he did so. He has been doing this through all the Christian centuries, and for this reason the centuries have been growing toward him. A Christ pent up, defined, understood, could not be the "captain of our salvation" (Heb. 2 : 10), leading humanity toward God and unfolding the divine life of God in man.

It is of utmost importance, then, to note carefully the methods of knowing persons, remembering meanwhile that Jesus Christ is a person.

1. *We come to understand persons by living with them.* Go on a month's camping trip with a man, and you will learn

much about him that you did not know before. If two women would really know each other, let them live together in the same house. People are acquainted when they marry, and yet they really know very little of each other. Married life, as previously stated, is a continuous revelation. When husband and wife have spent fifty years together, and children and grandchildren gather at the old home to celebrate their golden wedding, they know each other as they could not know each other on their wedding-day. Fifty years of companionship in joy and sorrow, disappointment and triumph, success and failure, have been a continuous revelation of each to the other; and in no other way is it possible for them to become thus known to each other. Explanations of personality would be trivial and unavailing.

It becomes apparent, then, how sensible and true to the laws of life Christ's method was when, refusing all explanations of himself, he simply said to those who would be disciples, "Follow me"; that is, be learners through companionship with me.

2. *We come to know by experience.* No one can explain his experience to another

who has not had the same or like experience. A painting, a sunset, a landscape, find no adequate expression in words. They must be experienced. Only those who have seen them understand each other when words are used to describe them. Years ago a young man, standing among the rock-chips of a petrified forest in Arizona, which had just been wet by a shower of rain that made all the colors live, could not hold back the tears. Only those with artistic temperament, and to whom like experiences were possible, could understand such tears. To others they would seem weak and foolish. Only the lover can understand a lover. Only the converted man is in position to understand the converted man—his new love, his changed purposes, his willing self-denial.

On the same principles, and by the same laws of our nature, we understand Christ as we experience what Christ experienced—obedience to the Father; confidence in the Father's love; love for the sinful; self-giving for the undeserving; disappointment in friends; hatred by enemies; patience with the dull and indifferent; yearning desire and strenuous endeavor to bring

the sinful and suffering into the forgiving love of God; being misunderstood, even by disciples, maligned, abused, and at length crucified for obeying God and loving men. In proportion as we pass through these experiences, not to mention deeper and more mysterious ones, may we hope to understand Christ.

3. *We understand persons as we become like them.* Artists understand artists. Mothers understand mothers. Sinners understand sinners. The righteous understand the righteous—their motives, purposes, love, and service.

Surely, then, the folly of seeking satisfactory explanations of Christ, explanations that construe his personality to our philosophy, and his vital processes to our logic, is evident. It is contrary to the laws of life to understand Christ except as we follow him, live with him, enter into his experiences, love him, and work with him. To know Christ is a lifelong process. Even at the end of life, though life be long, we know, as Paul said, "in part." It is promised, however, that in the eternal eons we shall see him as he is—when we shall have become like him. (1 John 3 : 2.)

A Scientific Method

This method of knowing Christ is not only Christ's own method, but also the scientific method.

1. Like all scientific methods, it involves *a venture of faith.* Pupils believe in, and entrust themselves to, their teachers. We entrust ourselves to railroads, steamships, and all means of conveyance. We eat freely at restaurants and hotels, whose cooks we do not know. We place our lives in the hands of physicians. Life itself is a great venture and involves faith at every turn. To live the Christian life, adopt Christ's principles, trust Christ's power, believe in and work for Christ's program, involves a venture of faith. In this respect it is like the whole of life. But it is the highest venture of faith for the highest goal and the highest service.

2. This method of knowing Christ, like all effective methods, involves *a definite purpose.* The chemist seeks a definite result. Educators aim to develop the individual and fit him for life. Investigators work on definite problems. As we thus pursue definite purposes we hit upon much unexpected

knowledge, but without definite purpose and well-directed endeavor, one is not carried far in any field of learning.

Christ's purpose is to produce the best type of life, both in the individual and in society. Whoever does not join him in this definite purpose, both for his own life and for the social good, may as well at once abandon all hope of knowing Christ. Whoever desires the best life for himself, earnestly seeks it, and is willing to pay the price of progress, will find his knowledge of Christ increasing with his growing experience.

3. This method of knowing Christ is *inductive*. It draws knowledge from experience. The chief characteristic of modern study is the inductive, as contrasted with the deductive, method. In biology, geology, sociology, and the other sciences, we deal with concrete facts, not with theories. We act upon the little knowledge we have, and are thus led to more knowledge. Acting on what we know of electricity, we light our homes, send messages, drive cars, and look at each other's bones.

This modern method of experiment is the one to which Christ invites us, and the only

one. "Follow me," test me, prove me, he constantly insisted, while shunting all questions of theory about himself. (Matt. 4 : 19; Luke 5 : 27; Mark 8 : 34; 10 : 21.)

4. Knowledge of Christ comes by *obedience to law,* like all other scientific knowledge. When the chemist disobeys chemical laws he bursts the test-tube, or blows up both himself and the laboratory. When the engineer disobeys the laws of physics the boiler bursts, or the building tumbles down, or the train crashes through the bridge. Disobedience to law, of course, brings negative knowledge—if we survive the disobedience; it tells us what not to do, but not what to do. Obedience to law gives constructive knowledge. It makes us co-operators with God. All his laws are at our beck and call as long as we obey them, while disobedience to law spells defeat and destruction.

In like manner, obedience to Christ makes all the laws of divine personality operative in us. Our characters are molded by association with him; love for him grows as we do for him and he for us; the more we love him the more we become like him; through our companionship with him his passion to

help and bless men grows upon us. These are simple and well-known laws of personality. They make us partners and coworkers with God through Jesus Christ.

Big Questions

It is of vital importance for young people to learn to live with, work patiently upon, and add their mite to, the solution of problems which no person, generation, or century settles. The young are eager to settle questions about Christ that have baffled all thinkers, such as, for example, How can God become incarnate? Is Christ really God? How can human and divine nature be joined in one person? How does Christ save us? How can one be converted by accepting Christ? How can Christ and evolution both be true? and many others.

Christ has never been explained, and doubtless never will be. Were he so simple and shallow that we could explain him, he doubtless could not be the Saviour of men. A Christ who grips life at its very heart, who awakens in one new desires and passions, who imparts himself increasingly to the race, who becomes the center of

human love, the acknowledged commander of human endeavor, and the dominant force in organizing society on an increasingly high basis of righteousness and brotherhood, is beyond all explanation. He becomes an ever deeper mystery.

Christ was a puzzle to the religious leaders of his own day, and an unsolved problem to his own disciples. Paul speaks of the mystery of Christ, "unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor. 1 : 23, 24; see Eph. 3 : 4; 6 : 19; 1 Tim. 3 : 9, 16). Christ himself, speaking of spiritual birth, said that it could not be explained, but was a fact, like the wind, which rose and fell without the cause being known. (See John 3 : 7, 8.)

It should be observed that the Bible labors—fairly groans—to express in terms of human experience, who and what Christ is. It calls him *Son of God* and *Son of Man*. We know something of sons in our homes—their place in the heart of the father, their relations to each other, their duties of filial obedience, their unity with

the father in purpose and endeavor. All this Christ is to God and men.

The Bible calls Christ *a king*. Christ himself admits that he is a king. (John 18 : 37.) We know something of kings—their right to rule, the duty of subjects, etc.

Christ is called *a redeemer*. In the days of slavery the redeemer was one who bought back the slave and set him free. People understood something of the work of a redeemer.

Christ is called *our sacrifice*. (Eph. 5 : 2.) It was a time when both heathen and Jewish sacrifices were common, and people understood their significance. They were a means of approach to God, an offering for sins committed, a way of reconciliation with God and of beginning life again with a clean sheet.

Christ is called *priest*. (Heb. 2 : 17.) People understood the function of priests. They stood between God and men; they brought men's offerings to God; they pleaded with God for men; they sought to keep men right with God; they made known to men the will of God.

Christ was called, and called himself, *a servant*. (Luke 22 : 27.) All knew the

work of a servant. He was obedient to his master; he bore the burdens of others; his was a life of ministry.

Christ calls himself the *good shepherd.* (John 10 : 11.) The people were familiar with the love, solicitude, and watch-care of shepherds—how they led their flocks into green pastures and beside refreshing waters; how they fought off wild beasts and brought the lambs safely into the fold; how they sought lost sheep, and did not hesitate to sacrifice life searching for them.

Christ calls himself the *bread of life.* (John 6 : 35.) In a country where beggars were numerous, where multitudes were poor, where conquering armies frequently swept away the harvests, people knew intensively the meaning of bread and its significance for life.

Christ calls himself the *water of life.* (John 4 : 14.) In a country of highlands and deserts, where small streams went dry in summer, and failure of rains often produced famines, the people knew the life-giving value of water.

Christ calls himself *the vine,* and his disciples branches. (John 15 : 1-8.) It was in a country of grapes. All understood how

dependent branches were upon the vine, and how the life of the vine flowed through the branches.

Christ called himself *the light of the world, the way, the truth, the life.* By still other names he was called. Every term was one falling within human experience, and lifting up out of experience a certain character-quality or spiritual relationship. These terms—son, king, redeemer, sacrifice, priest, servant, shepherd, vine, bread, water, light, way, truth, life—taken together, doubtless only begin to express to us what Christ really is to the race. They illustrate both the wealth and the poverty of human expression. Christ is more than all of them. Human knowledge and experience doubtless do not contain ideas or terms adequate to express fully what Jesus Christ is to humanity. He overfills and overflows all our ideas, all our terms, all our experiences. This fact Paul, the greatest expounder of Christ, evidently felt when, as in a burst of exultant despair over explanations, he exclaimed, "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2 : 9).

Christ makes the understanding of him-

self an agelong task—something into which the race grows as it experiences him—when he says to his disciples: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all the truth; . . for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you" (John 16: 12-14).

The rapid changes going on at present in religious thought amply illustrate Christ's teaching, that the Spirit of God is revealing to the growing mind of the race more and more of the truth in Christ. For example: For centuries men have emphasized the cross of Christ as the basis of salvation, and the salvation was thought of as safety in heaven hereafter. Today, while we hold both of these facts as precious truths, the emphasis has shifted, and the truths are seen in relations not before discerned. No longer do men believe that the cross of Christ will avail for him who neglects his own cross. They believe that as the way of the cross was the way of Christ's life, so every one who finds life must find it by way of the cross accepted as a principle of action for his own life. The later concep-

tion of the cross is maturer and more adequate than the earlier one. It betokens the breaking of a new light upon the soul of man from Christ's words, "Whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple."

Today also the cross of Christ is regarded, not only as a means of saving us in heaven, precious as that is, but more especially as a means of building heaven on earth. The cross of Christ, borne by men, means, in the life of men, love instead of hate, brotherliness instead of selfishness, the square deal instead of exploitation, helpfulness instead of indifference to others' needs, self-giving instead of self-seeking, "each for all, and all for each." The way of the cross is life, not simply a means to life. It is the abounding life, and any other sort of life is poor and mean and poverty-stricken compared with it. It is eternal life, life that grows on forever, flowering ever more gloriously as it grows.

Today, when one takes the cross into one's own life and lives it, we have no concern whatever about his salvation hereafter. We look for that to arrive as a matter of course, guaranteed by the quality of the life lived

here—life united to Christ, lived by the power of Christ, and having the quality of Christ's life.

And thus, as the centuries sweep on, the mind of the race ever maturing, and the Spirit of God ever teaching, we find ourselves, not going beyond Christ, but understanding him more fully. In the light of such facts, for one to seek adequate explanation of Christ, and to refuse to link his life with Christ until such explanation is forthcoming, is like the questioning child of four refusing to eat or drink until his father has answered all his machine-gun questions about food and drink. We know Christ by associating with him, working with him, taking into our lives his purposes, and experiencing the worth-whileness of sacrificing for truth and righteousness because men need truth and righteousness.

Christ Is Power

The person, Christ Jesus, in personal relations with the individual, is power. While during a brief three years he walked with his disciples, he transformed them from commonplace men into spiritual idealists and

moral heroes. He filled them with boundless faith in God and men. He kindled in them an undying love, for which they gladly worked, suffered, and died. He filled them with contagious and persuasive power over men, a power which caused men to turn their backs on heathenism, forsake sinful lives, love things before hated, and hate things before loved.

This miracle of transforming power has not ceased. There are several types of conversion—cataclasmic, calm and serene, and all the way between the two. The type is determined by differing conditions of home, school, church, beliefs, etc. But Christ's power in the life is manifest in all types. One in association with Christ is transformed, purified, and given poise, steadiness, and strength to pursue the good; he is filled with hope, courage, and heroism for righteousness. On the other hand, the moment a person consciously and wilfully disassociates himself from Christ, he begins to decline spiritually and morally; he begins to lose faith in God and men; he ceases to be a wholesome and uplifting dynamic in other lives.

The power of Christ has changed and

is changing the conditions of society. Some evils, such as slavery, are wholly done away. So extensively has the spirit of brotherhood spread, that war, once the ordinary business of nations, is condemned by the whole race, except as a national necessity, and as a measure of self-defense. Ridiculous as it was, Germany must put forth the self-defense plea to justify war to her own people. Charity—organized, expensive, but imperative—a product of Christ's spirit in men, hastens to supply human needs wherever they appear on the entire globe. This fact, the multiple ministries of the Red Cross, the Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations, and the Knights of Columbus attest. Christian missionaries hasten with messages of God's love to every known land, and Christian preachers, teachers, physicians, engineers, and other workers fill all lands with tokens of Christ's uplifting power.

The Christian emphasis today is largely social. Christian business men, as never before in history, are insisting upon "the square deal" because all men are brothers. Christians are found everywhere working in causes of social uplift—temperance, sani-

tation, good housing, fair wages, adequate hospitals, good schools, ample parks and playgrounds, healthful recreations, social purity, and worthful life for all.

One only needs to compare ours with other civilizations to realize that ours is *Christian,* leavened with the spirit of Christ, and that a power from Christ, working in the hearts of men, is the dynamic which holds it up and pushes it forward.

Christ Judges Men

Every one is fairly judged by his attitude to Christ. "He that rejecteth me," says Christ, "and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12 : 48). When one looks at a masterpiece and calls it a chromo, he is condemned as not being an artist. When one looks at the character of Christ—its beauty, symmetry, justice, sympathy, forgiveness, righteousness, love, heroism, self-giving, and willingness to suffer and die for men—his judgment of that character, his attitude toward it, and his relations with it, weigh him and judge him.

To choose Christ is to choose the highest life, to require of one's self heroism to fight against sin both in self and society; and to associate with Christ is to seek inspiration and strength for the struggle. It is said that "the good is the enemy of the best," and it is true. To choose Christ is to choose the best, to live with the best, to work for the best. Looking at Christ, one squarely faces a great challenge—whether with Christ he will choose his own best, or without Christ fall short of it.

It should be emphasized here, even at the risk of repetition, that to choose Christ is not to accept some theological formulas about Christ. Christ is a person, alive from the dead, eager to be friend and companion to every one of us, and to endue us with spiritual power as we join purposes with him and exert ourselves to supply the world's spiritual needs.

The writer will never forget the years of struggle during which he sought to work out a satisfactory theory of the atonement of Christ, and the failure accompanying the attempt. It was like a burst of sunshine through the clouds when an aged ministerial friend said simply: "You do not

have to have any theory of the atonement. Christ is a person. Deal with him personally, not with theories about him."

Christ is not our Saviour because we believe in him as Saviour, but because of what he works in us when we make him friend, companion, may I not say, chum. The things of supreme value for life are facts, not theories; persons, not philosophies. A friend of the author's undertook to persuade a man that Jesus was Saviour by piloting him through the whole body of "Christian Evidences" as they were embodied in books years ago. When they had finished, my friend inquired, "Are you convinced?" "Yes," replied the man, "but I am no different." One may accept without question all theologies about Christ without having Christ as a power in his life; and one may know nothing about theologies, and care less for them, and have Christ in his life a continuous revelation, a growing power, and an increasing joy, if only he will make Christ his friend and companion, and be true to him as such. "Follow me," Christ commands. If we obey, he becomes to us the bread of life, the water of life, the light of life, the way

of life, the truth of life, the life itself. Gradually and increasingly there comes to us through him revelation of what God is, revelation of ourselves, revelation of the eternal principles which bind God and man together, which transform men into the divine image, and which, through the long centuries, produce the growing union of man with God and men with men.

Then fiercely we dig the fountain,
  Oh! where do the waters rise?
Then, panting, we climb the mountain,
  Oh! are there indeed blue skies?
And we dig till the soul is weary,
  Nor find the waters out,
And we climb till all is dreary,
  And still the sky is a doubt.

Search not the roots of the fountain,
  But drink the waters bright;
Gaze far above the mountain,
  The sky may speak in light—
But if yet thou see no beauty,
  If, widowed, thy heart still cries,
With thy hands go do thy duty,
  And thy work will clear thine eyes.

—*George Macdonald.*

IV

Evolution

EVOLUTION

THE study of biological evolution is apt to disturb for a time the religious ideas of young people in colleges and universities. That the facts of modern science conflict with medieval religious ideas, goes without saying. They equally conflict with medieval scientific beliefs. But between the facts of modern science and the best religious thought of our day there is no conflict, but instead a marvelous and significant harmony. It would be difficult to find a single prominent Christian scholar today who does not believe in the theory of evolution. The conflict which the young imagine to exist between this theory and religion arises out of mistaken notions of both science and religion. Among these mistaken notions are the following:

1. People sometimes speak of evolution as though it were sufficient unto itself, an energizing force which develops life from lower to higher stages. Just as any

law in and of itself does nothing, but tells how some force operates, so evolution in and of itself does nothing, but is descriptive of the way in which force works. Back of all phases of the theory of evolution is the question, What is the force at work? The Christian evolutionist says it is God. God creates, and is ever creating. From the first life cell, and before, to the highest man in the most complex society, God is energizing. Nothing is apart from him. Laws and methods and theories simply tell, or attempt to tell, how he works. God is not an absentee landlord, but an indwelling energy in the physical universe, an unfolding power in biological creation, and an indwelling and guiding Spirit in man and society. "In him we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17 : 28).

2. This erroneous idea, that evolution is a force instead of the description of the working of a force, is sometimes carried to the extreme of assuming that physical and biological forces are sufficient to account for social phenomena. But no well-informed scientist today thinks of accounting for social phenomena, and social and spiritual progress, simply by the operation of phys-

ical and biological forces. Into the process, even of biological evolution, new and inexplicable forces keep entering—forces which separate species and mark off eras. All that goes before new species cannot account for them. The less never accounts for the greater; nor the lower for the higher. The oyster cannot account for the fish, nor the fish for the amphibian, nor the amphibian for the bird, nor the bird for the mammal, nor all lower animals for man.

Into social evolution also new forces enter: Mind controls, love is powerful, ethical ideas grip, great ideals lift, and God comes increasingly into conscious relations with men.

Instead of there being some so-called evolutionary force that is unfolding all things, we are living in a continuous process of creation. New forces enter every now and then to change the direction of progress and lift life to a higher plane. The Spirit of the eternal God fairly throbs and thrills through the whole process.

Why is it that a nation like the United States, for years in the grip of commercialism, and, as some think, money-mad, with its young men dominated by ambition

for success, suddenly took up arms, poured out treasure, and laid down life in the world war for an ideal—the ideal that every nation, no matter how small or weak, has a right to work out its highest possibilities in its own place unmolested, and that right, not might, must rule the world? What had come over our young men that, with tear-dimmed eyes as they left home and friends, they said, as some of them said to the writer: "I want to do something for my country;" "Unless I have part in the war, I would not want to live after the war;" "They may bury me on the hills of France, but if so I shall feel that my life has been well spent"? Why did the boys in the trenches get next to God as never before, pray the thing through at night, and in the morning, with victory in their hearts, go into the drive singing, deeming it worth while to die if need be to help those who should live after them to realize an ideal? Why? God was moving upon men in a new way, turning life in a nobler direction, and lifting it to a higher stage of manliness. The same God who has worked in the whole life process from the beginning was working in new ways. Men today are in

the grip of world ideas, and humanitarian feelings of unprecedented breadth and depth are moving them to action. God is creating a new social order.

3. Another erroneous notion is that evolution is wholly a gradual process. It is, indeed, largely gradual; and yet the whole course of evolution is marked by occasional, and somewhat frequent sudden changes, new outbursts of power, new directions of life. These sudden leaps—mutations, some of them have been called—are inexplicable.

Perhaps the simplest analogy to these sudden changes is found in the individual, who is thought by many to recapitulate in a rough way the life history of the race. Not to mention prior changes, human birth is a sudden break in the prenatal life. After the event new powers unfold, and the individual enters into new relations. The age of puberty again brings sudden changes, both physical and mental, and after these changes a new era in life begins. In the individual's spiritual life, conversion marks the end of an old era and the beginning of a new one. Christ calls it a new birth. So marked is it with most people that, as Paul says, one is "a new creature: old things are

passed away; behold, all things are become new." (2 Cor. 5 : 17). Life assumes a new attitude, experiences a new joy, finds a new love, becomes possessed of a new faith, is moved by a new purpose, enlists in a new service. In a word, a new force has entered the individual, which starts into new and vigorous growth elements of life before latent, and guides the life in a new and higher direction.

Analogous to these comparatively sudden changes in individual evolution, are the more or less sudden changes in the unfolding of life as a whole. Biological species show innumerable inexplicable changes; between species there are great and sudden leaps; and there is a wide, unbridged gulf between the highest animal and the lowest man.

Social evolution also is filled with sudden outbursts of new life and sudden manifestations of new power. The most marked one in history is the advent of Christ. His advent began a new era and changed the course of human development. It filled men with new hopes, new purposes, new faith, new love, new courage, new allegiance, new devotion, and a new spirit of

self-giving. It began the development of a new humanitarianism, which found expression in a new valuation of the individual, more humanitarian laws, more beneficent institutions, juster government, more equitable trade relations—in a word, in a higher and finer humanity.

Less great and sudden changes appear in the barbarian invasion of Italy, which overthrew the Roman empire; in the Crusades, the Reformation, and the Renaissance. The world war will doubtless prove to be the most significant sudden historic event since Christ. It is the bursting forth of new life; it will mark off more or less distinctly a new era; it will change the direction of human thought and endeavor, especially in those spheres of life which make for social betterment and have to do directly with the building of the kingdom of God on earth. Now that the war is over every one expects the world to be different. It will be better than before, for the processes of social evolution lead upward. The mind of man is travailing in a new birth. It is coming to a keener appreciation of the rights of even the weakest man and nation, to a new discernment of the things that are

most worth while, to a new resolve for brotherly conduct in the whole of life, to a growing sense of the presence, power, and working of God in the individual and in history, and to a growing appreciation of the things that God values.

4. Another wrong notion about evolution arises from the fact that students, after a smattering of biological evolution, leap to the conclusion that biological methods of evolution—differentiation, selection, propagation, adaptation, struggle for existence, survival of the fittest—continue to be the methods of social evolution. The facts are otherwise, or perhaps more accurately, these principles of evolution must be differently interpreted or applied when we enter the field of social evolution.

Professor Drummond, in his "Ascent of Man," showed that the human struggle for existence was not for self, as is largely true in biological evolution, but increasingly for others; and history corroborates his showing. The United States went to war with Spain, not in a struggle for self, but for Cuba. In the world war, while the United States apprehended a possible future danger from Germany, that future possibility alone

would not have led us to take up arms when we did. Our impelling motive was a sense of duty to contribute our part in the winning of liberty and democracy for all peoples. We entered the struggle, not for self, but for the larger life of humanity.

The great difference between biological and social evolution is that the former is primarily an evolution of physical life as expressed in physical forms—the bodies of genera and species of animals; whereas the latter is the evolution of psychic life as expressed in social forms—governments, customs, laws, institutions, etc. The strata of human history are as filled with fossil social institutions as are the geologic strata with the remains of fossil animals.

Let it be noted that biological evolution reached its goal in the production of the human body. There are no human genera or species. Whether we go back to the earliest human remains or examine all living races, no divergencies of human forms are found sufficient for a basis of different species, much less genera.

With the advent of man, and the perfection of the physical form, the goal of evolution is lifted higher, and its methods be-

come different. Human progress is not in being molded by environment, as was largely the case with animal progress, but in psychic mastery of environment—in cultivating land, building cities, making the world smaller by rapid communication, and in adjusting human relations to these new environing conditions.

Why the biological organism varies in certain directions rather than others, is not known. No more is it known why the social mind grows in certain directions, ever making demands upon itself for new adjustments—more brotherhood, more sympathy, more justice, more cooperation, more service; except that the social mind, plant-like, grows toward the light, toward the Christ, "the light of the world."

In social evolution, as indicated above, if biological laws continue to operate, they must be differently applied. For example, the "fittest" in the "struggle for existence" are no longer the strongest physically, but the best; not those who fight, but those who cooperate; not those who hate their enemies, but those who love them; not those who exploit their fellows, but those who serve them. Events, of course, often

seem to indicate the contrary, but they do not. Christ seemed to go down in defeat when he was crucified, but his crucifiers are forgotten, the world has repudiated their principles, and the crucified Christ has conquered the human heart and is leavening the laws of nations increasingly with his spirit. *Not the strong, but the best survive.* The application here, of course, is not to individuals, nor even to races of men, but to those higher qualities of life for which men are willing to die, and which get themselves embodied in human convictions, laws, governments, and institutions. These are propagated century after century; they continue because they are fittest to continue. The Romans thought they were making an end of the Christians when they threw them to the lions. The Romans were physically strong and the Christians physically weak. But "the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the church." The Christians were really the strong, for they embodied those principles which human institutions needed, and which the heart of man would not let die. The Roman Government has perished; Christian principles live on with more and more abundant life.

In social evolution, then, the struggle is not between individuals and species as in biological evolution, and the fittest to survive are not the strongest. The struggle is one between social institutions, between organized phases of the social mind; and the best institutions, that is, those best adapted to serve human needs, survive. For example, the Christian church has become differentiated into many branches, each with its particular creed and forms of worship. These differing creeds and forms of worship contend for the mastery. Those best adapted to human needs are selected out by the sifting years. They propagate themselves for longer or shorter time. They are constantly face to face with the problem of adaptation to the needs of men. Those that adjust themselves to human needs survive; those that fail to adjust themselves perish.

The same facts are true of all social institutions. England, in the treatment of her colonies, is an outstanding example of governmental adjustment to growing political, economic, and social needs. Spain, in the treatment of her colonies, is an example of precisely the opposite sort. En-

gland, therefore, has been growing strong while Spain has been growing weak.

The Germans in the world war challenged the fundamental fact of social evolution—that it is the upward progress of mankind and not simply the survival of brute force. The struggle was between autocracy and democracy as political institutions, between force and right as principles of government, and between materialism and idealism as philosophies of life. The fittest survived. For two thousand years the social mind has been growing toward democracy, and autocracy was doomed. Even had the Allies been beaten, it was doomed in time, doomed as those who crucified Christ were doomed, and as those who threw the Christians to the lions were doomed. Not the strongest, but the best, whether strong or weak, survive. The nation that does not adjust itself to this principle of social growth will perish. This dictum is written in history. It is the fiat of the social life process.

Not only is there no conflict between the scientific theory of evolution and modern Christian thought, but the theory has helped to amplify and broaden Christian thought,

and to bring the thinking of Christians nearer to the teachings of Christ. As all are aware, each field of knowledge influences every other field. Science influences philosophy, and philosophy science; religion influences government, and government religion, and so on. A clear illustration, for example, of the influence of government on religion lies in the historic fact that governmental forms have been powerful in molding men's ideas of God. In the Old Testament ages, when war was the business of nations, God was thought of as a god of war, as approving the spoils of war, and as sanctioning cruelties against heathen nations. Calvin developed his stern doctrine of God's sovereignty in days of kingly rule. In our democratic era, when there is a goodly infusion of brotherly love in social relations, and class distinctions are breaking down, and there is more of the "square deal" in business, we are able to understand and appreciate the teachings of Christ, that God is a Father. In strong contrast with the idea of God developed under democracy was the German idea of God developed under an overbearing and dominating autocracy—a

god who cared for Germans as he did not care for others, who looked with favor upon the rule of physical might, who led on in ruthless warfare—the "German Gott." Thus governmental ideas greatly affect religious ideas.

In like manner the theory of evolution has greatly influenced religious thinking. Its special contribution is the emphasis it places on the element of time in God's working. The theory allows eons of time for physical evolution before life appears on the planet; and eons of time for biological evolution before man appears; and uncounted centuries—from man's first appearance to the present—for social evolution. God is not in a hurry. With him "a thousand years are as one day and one day as a thousand years." Thus the long-time emphasis enables us to enlarge and extend our conception of the whole process of God's working and bring it into conformity with the teachings of Christ. The following particulars may be noted:

1. Early Christians expected Christ to come again suddenly, bring all mundane affairs to an end, and take them home to glory. Christ, on the contrary, taught that

God's processes were those of the mustard-seed and the pervading leaven—gradual processes. The theory of evolution has so familiarized our thought with the element of time in God's working that we can now understand and apply Christ's teachings. We see God working in the star-dust and in the first cell. He lifts life up species by species, unfolding new powers at every step, and opening the way to larger possibilities. He leads man forth from the rest of his creatures, new, different, higher. At every step of social development God energizes. His Spirit is in man, and works through man, increasingly conforming man's thought, desires, and endeavors to his will. The unfolding of life is a long, gradual, upward process; it is still going forward; and men, as Paul taught, are workers together with God in the task.

2. Familiarity with the time element in God's working, has filled us with hope for society and courage for sacrificial work. Men no longer despair of saving society and abandon social tasks, as once they did, for hermit cells. They realize that social tasks are long, hard tasks, requiring patience, faith, and continuous work. The

time element has taught us that great evils are to be banished from the social order one by one. It has given new confidence in the certainty of the upward trend of civilization under the vitalizing power of Christ. It has led us to appreciation of the far-reaching influence of every forceful personality and every human endeavor as we work with Christ in redeeming the world.

3. Familiarity with the time element has brought the "kingdom of God" down out of heaven, where the early Christians placed it, to be upon the earth, where Christ placed it. As before indicated, the early Christians looked for a sudden ending of the world, and the establishment of the kingdom of God in heaven. This conception obtained for long centuries, and is not yet extinct, although increasing numbers of Christians are emphasizing the kingdom of God on earth, where Christ came to set it up. Men are now busy working and fighting and legislating to get men here on earth to do God's will, the doing of which is God's kingdom. We call ours a social century, for we have gripped the social task in earnest. The emphasis of governments today is upon right social relationships, and the

emphasis of religion is upon Christian ethics and service. This means, not simply salvation hereafter, but righteous living here. It means righteous fathers and mothers, righteous homes, righteous teachers, righteous pupils, righteous business men, righteous politicians, righteous governments, righteous international relations, righteous work, and righteous pleasures. It means that ultimately prophetic visions are to be realized, when "holiness to the Lord" will be engraved on the bridles of our horses, blazoned in large signs over our homes and stores, and set as mottoes in our factories and government buildings. Or, if we change the prophetic pictures to Christ's teaching, the leaven of righteousness is to pervade the whole lump of human relationships.

Not until the theory of evolution suggested the time element and called attention to the long, gradual process of social uplift, did men in large numbers abandon the ideas of a sudden cataclasmic ending of all mundane things, as suggested by the literal interpretation of the pictorial language of Scripture, and adequately devote themselves to the making of a better world.

The social process, then, as conceived under the theory of evolution, is not only in harmony with Christ's teachings, but throws a flood of light upon them. Christ is not apart from, but a constituent factor in, that continuous working of God which operates from the first dawn of life, and before it; which unfolds life from lower to higher stages until the fulness of his thought, purpose, and love are realized in his creation. Now it is clear that the kingdom of God begins in the small—the mustard-seed—and, by a process of growth, fills the world; that, in the process, the wheat and tares grow together; that those who work for righteousness are not to fear or waver when the forces of evil seem triumphant; that Christ, when lifted up, will draw all men to himself; that the kingdoms of this world will become the "kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ." In a word, the theory of evolution, by emphasizing the time element, has greatly enlarged what men formerly conceived to be Christ's work, and has enabled men in fuller measure to grasp Christ's real program of redeeming the world. There is no halting; there can be no turning back; defeat is impossible.

V

The Bible

THE BIBLE

THE Old Testament was produced during about one thousand five hundred years, roughly speaking, from about 2000 B. C. to about 500 B. C., or from Abraham to Nehemiah. For perhaps half of this period the early materials were passed down from generation to generation in the form of traditions or separately written narratives. Sometimes there were different versions of these narratives, which varied somewhat in style and contents. In the later years of the period these different versions were woven together into about the form which they now bear. The fathers of Israel were commanded to narrate to their children the stories of God's dealings with them, and thus to pass them on from generation to generation. (See Exod. 10 : 2; Josh. 4 : 5-7.)

From about the ninth century B. C. the Bible narratives began to be wrought over by the prophetic spirits of Israel. The

materials chosen, and the form into which they were put, depended on the situation of the people and the needs of the hour, just as the materials chosen for a sermon depend upon the character and needs of the congregation.

During the later centuries of the period named the situation of the Hebrews varied greatly; their spiritual needs differed at different times; and consequently the Bible writings vary greatly in nature and content. Through them we learn of Israel's shepherd life, her enslavement in Egypt, her wanderings in the wilderness, her conquest of Canaan, her successes and defeats in war, her faithfulness and unfaithfulness to Jehovah, her national prosperity and adversity, her captivity in Assyria and Babylonia, and finally the return of a faithful few to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple and to reestablish the national life of the people.

The contents of the Old Testament were produced out of these varying conditions, and by men of various types and accomplishments—by prophets, poets, biographers, historians, law-givers, priests, philosophers, dramatists, and others.

Needless to say, then, the Old Testament is not a book, but a library of many books, which vary greatly in character and contents. Noah and the Flood, is a good example of tradition; Jonah and the Whale, is evidently a great story; the accounts of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph are biographic sketches; the books of Kings and Chronicles are brief, selected history; Nathan's rebuke of David for taking Uriah's wife, is in the form of parable (2 Sam. 12 : 1-14), which was Christ's favorite method of teaching; the Psalms, of course, are poetry, and other portions are in poetic form; Jotham's rebuke of his brethren is in the form of allegory, in which trees speak (Judg. 9 : 7-15); much of the ethical teaching of the Bible is in the form of prophecy, such, for example, as the books of Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Jeremiah; Job is a drama dealing with one of the profoundest problems of life; Leviticus and Deuteronomy are made up largely of laws; and Proverbs is a collection of maxims, called by modern scholars "wisdom literature."

It is of utmost importance to note carefully that the Old Testament is composed

of these different kinds of literature—tradition, story, history, biography, parable, poetry, allegory, prophecy, drama, maxims, etc.—for it is not always clear which of these kinds of literature certain portions of the Bible contain. For example, men differ widely in their ideas of the literature which narrates the accounts of the Creation, the Temptation of Adam and Eve, the Sacrifices of Cain and Abel, the Flood, and other portions, some holding that they are literal history, others that they are traditions, and still others that they are poetical writings.

The Bible Stands Secure

These differing kinds of literature, and these differing views, should not disturb us in the least, for they in no way invalidate our Bible. God makes his will known by different means. He inspires men to utter truth through poetry and story as well as through history and prophecy. His revelation is found in parable as well as in biography.

The one question of importance is: *What does the Bible teach?* Any part of the

Bible that does not hold a spiritual message, or is not necessary to make clear some part that does hold a spiritual message, may well be discarded. It has no spiritual value and does not belong in the Bible. For purposes of illustration we may note the following examples:

1. Does not the Creation Story teach that one God, not idols, created the world and all that is in it? Does it not teach that one God created man and breathed into him the divine life? These truths are basal for all religious thinking. It does not matter in the least whether they are uttered through history, parable, story, drama, pictorial narrative, or any other kind of literature. The whole point is to get the truth uttered clearly, briefly, interestingly, and powerfully. It is an evident abuse of the Bible, and an utter misconception of its fundamental purpose, to bring questions of science into the Creation Story. The Bible does not teach science, evidently has no intention of doing so, and in that fact the wisdom of the Scriptures is manifest. The Bible is a revelation of spiritual truth.

2. Does the account of the Temptation of Adam and Eve need to be history in

order to teach spiritual truth? The account sets forth (1) that man lives in a garden, in which some trees are forbidden and others are not, (2) that man by free choice may take the way of life or the way of death, (3) that man is beset on one side by the voice of God calling him in the way of life, and on the other by a voice which strives, by deception, and by casting discredit on God, to lead him in the way of death, (4) that the ways of disobedience are often pleasant to the eyes and enticing to the imagination, (5) that we do not sin alone but are tempted by each other, (6) that, notwithstanding all excuses, there is no good reason for disobeying God, (7) that God does not take excuses, but punishes sinners, (8) that the disobedient are shut out of life's real garden, (9) that, notwithstanding man's disobedience, God still loves him (he clothes Adam and Eve with skins), (10) that, though man has fallen into sin, there is still hope of attaining righteousness (the seed of the woman is to bruise the serpent's head).

Every one of these ten truths is fundamental for spiritual life. The marvel is that they could be so simply, tersely told.

3. The short Story of Cain and Abel makes clear the great truths (1) that God is not placated by sacrifices offered by sinful men, and (2) that righteousness must be conjoined with worship. It must be remembered that these truths were uttered when heathen cults did not connect righteousness with worship.

4. The Story of the Flood indicates God's attitude to righteous and wicked and shows the respective ends to which each comes: the righteous are saved; the wicked are lost.

5. The Story of the Tower of Babel shows the folly of men presuming to go on their own ways in life without consulting God.

This series of stories evidently constitutes a brief introduction to the Bible, and the writer holds in mind the problems and national sins that are met with in Israel's history. The great truths uttered constitute the foundation of all right religious thinking. It is significant of the character of the Bible that they are uttered so concisely and clearly in its first chapters.[1]

[1] For a fuller discussion of these narratives see the author's "Bible Message for Modern Manhood," Chap. I-IV.

Difficulties with the Bible

1. One difficulty that we encounter with the Bible is that heretofore certain parts have been regarded as literal history which we find difficult to accept as literal. The early Genesis stories just reviewed, are a good example.

It has already been sufficiently shown that the spiritual value of such parts of the Bible does not depend upon their being literal history any more than does the spiritual value of the Psalms or of the parables of our Lord. Indeed, history is not so direct and effective a medium of teaching as parable and story. In the latter everything is freely shaped for the teaching purpose, while in the former the trammels of historic fact are ever upon the teacher. It is well known by all scholars that the history contained in the Bible is selected, sifted, and somewhat idealized for teaching purposes.

The author once heard an able sermon from the text, "The bush was not consumed," the incident being that of Moses before the burning bush in the wilderness of Sinai. The emphasis of the sermon was

upon the reality of the supernatural. Some young men of the author's acquaintance who heard the sermon, were not persuaded of the supernaturalness of the event, and consequently received little or no help from the sermon.

With the supernaturalness of the burning bush the author had never experienced any difficulty; but the fact that the young men were unpersuaded, led him to inquire: Could this incident of the burning bush be a pictorial scene, a strong setting of the soul conflict of Moses? If so, What is the prophet teaching through it? Analysis of the situation shows:

(1) That Moses was confronting the call of God to go and deliver Israel from Egyptian bondage, just as every Christian young man sooner or later confronts the call of God—sometimes a great and crucial call—to a life-work.

(2) The surprise of the situation was that "the bush was not consumed." Moses expected it to be consumed, just as he expected his life to be consumed, worn out, spent for naught, if he followed God's call to deliver Israel; and just as every young man expects his life to be consumed—riches

given up, worldly success relinquished, place and power and honorable position all thrown overboard—if he follows God's call, it may be into the ministry or to the foreign field.

But in Moses' life, as in the bush, there was not a consuming, but an increasing. He came to power, honor, and fame by following God's call, whereas he expected to be robbed of all these. If he followed the call he expected the heart to go out of life, whereas, on the contrary, a service was rendered which put heart into life. Had Moses refused the call, his life would have been consumed in the wilderness without the world hearing of him. Because he followed the call, he is above all others the law-giver of the race. The bush of his life was not consumed. Neither will the bush of any man's life be consumed who follows God's call.

(3) On the other hand, out of the bush came the revelation of God—the voice saying, "I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Out of the bush came the great challenge to Moses' faith: "Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the

children of Israel out of Egypt. . . Certainly I will be with thee; and . . . ye shall serve God upon this mountain." (See Exod. 3.)

Moses believed God, he accepted the challenge, and the revelation of the bush was reproduced in his life and work. By following God's call and doing God's work, he became increasingly sure that the God of his fathers had spoken to him, was leading him and working through him. A like assurance of the certainty of God, of the verity of his call, and of his cooperation in work, comes to every one who obeys him and runs the risk of his life being consumed. The bush was not consumed; neither will the life be consumed. The bush was a revelation; so will be the life.

(4) As Moses stands before the burning bush, he is commanded, "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground" (Exod. 3 : 5). No place is holier to any man than the place where God meets him face to face, and challenges him to meet, by acceptance or refusal, his definite call to a life-work.

Surely these four great truths are clearly

taught in the narrative as it stands, whatever be its character as literature. What more could it teach? These were the pertinent and vital truths for Moses as he faced God's call. They are the vital truths for every one under like circumstances.

Other portions of Scripture, such for example, as the book of Jonah, might be dealt with in similar fashion; but enough has already been said to make clear the importance of placing the spiritual teachings of the Bible first, and regarding all other questions of secondary importance.

2. Young people often think that something is wrong with their religious lives because they do not find all portions of the Bible equally interesting. All parts of the Bible are neither of equal interest nor of equal spiritual value. This fact should be clearly understood and definitely stated. For example, laws of tabernacle, temple, and sacrifices, belong to forms and customs in which we now have little interest. The records of the wars of Israel neither interest nor profit us much. Many of the prophecies refer to situations long past and little known, so that many references in them are obscure. This is not to say that

such portions of Scripture are not of interest to scholars. They are of great interest, and also of great profit, for they throw light upon past social institutions and customs, and also upon the development of religion.

3. Perhaps the young person's greatest difficulty with the Old Testament is found in the ethics which it sanctions, and which are so contrary to the ethics of Christ and of the present day.

The Old Testament sanctions polygamy, concubinage, slavery, and the savage slaughter of men, women, children, and animals in war. It sanctions religious persecution, as when Elijah kills the four hundred prophets of Baal. The problem is to regard a book which sanctions such ethics as the revelation of God; but the difficulty will disappear when a few things are understood:

(1) Christ plainly teaches that the Old Testament is partial and imperfect. No one could claim that it is anything else. "Ye have heard that it hath been said," says Christ, "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth; but I say unto you, that ye resist not evil" (Matt. 5:38, 39). Christ speaks

in similar fashion of loving neighbors and hating enemies: he bids us love our enemies. (Matt. 5 : 43, 44.) He said that Moses gave certain laws of divorce on account of the hardness of men's hearts. (Matt. 19 : 8.) It was the best that Moses could do at the time, for it was the best that the people could receive. Christ declares himself to be the fulfilment of the law. Not until he came do we have God's perfect revelation. All that went before him was partial. Even God's revelation to us in Christ is progressive, for we only gradually understand Christ. To his disciples Christ said that he had many things to reveal, but that they could not receive them, and that the Holy Spirit would progressively reveal them. (John 16 : 12.)

(2) That God's revelation to man is *gradual and progressive* cannot be overemphasized in this connection, for it makes clear the fact that the ethics of the Old Testament could not be other than partial, and that there is necessarily a great disparity between Old Testament ethics and our own.

The situation will be made clear by thinking of a child in the kindergarten. The

teacher does not teach him college subjects, not because she is unable to do so, but because the child is unable to understand. A child of ten is not taught philosophy; its mind is not sufficiently mature to receive it. And just as the individual must grow up to the comprehension of certain things, so must a people, and so must the race. We speak of reformers as being ahead of their times, meaning that the people are not sufficiently advanced to understand and appreciate them. It is important to note that there is a certain necessary order in human progress. For example, it would be wholly beside the mark to discuss the justice of a wage scale while men were still in slavery, or conditions of peace while nations were hot for war, or human ethics before men had formed an idea of the character of God.

Christ came in the " fulness of time," that is, when the race, or at least a portion of it, had been brought up to the point where Christ could make a beginning of his higher revelation.

Let us then not seek to justify the ethics of the Old Testament, but frankly admit that the heroes of faith in Old Testament

times thought that many things were right which Christ condemned, and which would be wrong today.

(3) We come now upon what is perhaps our greatest difficulty, viz., Did God actually tell the people to do things which to us would be wrong? To illustrate this point there are no better cases than those already used in another connection—the cases of Elijah and Samuel. Did God tell Elijah to slay the four hundred prophets of Baal? Did God tell Samuel to command Saul to destroy the Amalekites without reserve and without mercy—men, women, children, and cattle?

The Old Testament heroes certainly believed that God wanted them to do these things. In doing them they believed that they were fighting God's battles. This is the most that can be said. But let it be carefully noted just how much has been said.

a. The highest point of ethics that any one can reach at any given time lies in doing *what one believes God wants one to do*. The specific things we do are determined by the social, economic, and governmental conceptions of our times, and by the degrees of revelation that we are capable

of receiving. These Old Testament heroes obeyed their convictions of God's will according to the clearest light of their day. This is the utmost that any one can do at any time. We cannot do more today. To the question, then, Did God tell them to do these things? the answer must be that they believed God told them to do them; and for men to follow where they believe God leads, is not only the highest ethics possible at the time, but the condition of receiving clearer light and reaching higher ethics.

b. Again, What is the highest revelation one can receive from God? Simply the soul's persuasion of God's will. But is there not a difference between God's actual will and the soul's persuasion of God's will? Certainly. The former is perfect and consistent from the beginning; the latter changes with increasing light. One's conviction of what God's will is, depends upon home, school, church, associations, beliefs, and interests. A people's conviction of God's will depends upon current ideas, habits, customs, institutions, etc.

When we say, then, that the Old Testament heroes did what they believed to be God's will, we affirm that they reached the

highest ethics for their day by acting upon the highest revelation that they were capable of receiving.

A serious error at this point lies in failure to understand the inherent difficulty of revelation. We usually think and speak as though God could stand bodily before a man and tell him things. If this were done, how would God be recognized as God? One must be persuaded that it is really God who speaks. If God sends a personal messenger to declare his will, the messenger must bear credentials, and one must be persuaded that the credentials are genuine. Satan may take the form of an "angel of light."

If God simply speaks to us through our consciences, the case is the same: The supreme height of possible revelation at any time is *the soul's conviction that God is speaking*. Christ, as we know, came in human form to reveal God and make plain his will. Some were not persuaded. They said: "He hath a devil, and is mad: Why hear ye him" (John 10 : 20). Others listened to his words and were puzzled. Some said, "If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly" (John 10 : 24). Christ did not

tell them, for persuasion does not come by being told. At other times, when Christ claimed to be from God, they accused him of bearing witness of himself. As a matter of fact, Christ was, and is, a revelation of God only to those who believe him and are persuaded that he is from God.

And so again, the highest possible point of revelation is *conviction that God is speaking to the soul,* and the highest point of ethics for us is the doing of God's will as we see it. These facts justify the Old Testament as a partial and progressive revelation of God, and make plain why the Old Testament ethics could not have been other than they were.

How to Read the Bible

Every person should own a Bible. From his own Bible he should read and study. The writer, after over thirty years, still cherishes the Bible presented to him by his mother when he left home for college. On the fly-leaf, in mother's handwriting, are these words, selected from the first chapter of Joshua and from other noble Bible exhortations:

My son, be strong and of a good courage; fear not, nor be afraid; for the Lord thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee nor forsake thee.

My son, only be faithful; be steadfast, immovable; watch ye; stand fast in the faith; quit you like men; be strong, that ye may walk worthy of the high vocation wherewith he hath called you.

MOTHER.

This Bible was used as long as it was usable, and is now preserved as a keepsake.

One should have a system of marking the passages that especially appeal to him, being careful not to mark too freely, lest the abundance of marks divest them of significance. The portions marked one will read repeatedly, and from these one will derive the most benefit. The author has marked a few Psalms, the whole of which were helpful, like the twenty-third, thirty-seventh, and a few others, with a simple check (x) beside the chapter number. In other Psalms he marks a verse, a portion of a verse, or a few verses, with a pencil line on the side margin. He never reads the Scriptures with more pleasure and profit than when he glances through the pages

rapidly, reading only these marked portions.

One should read one's Bible for at least three purposes, the purpose determining the method of reading:

1. One should read for spiritual food. Just as a mature person eats the food that he likes, and finds that such food agrees with him best and nourishes him most, so for spiritual nourishment, he should read those portions of Scripture which appeal to him, find him, give him spiritual exhilaration, reenforce his will, and deepen and broaden his love. All parts of Scripture are not alike in their food qualities. One must, therefore, select and repeatedly read some portions while passing over other portions.

One weakness of our reading is a sort of felt necessity of reading a specified portion—a certain number of verses or a chapter. We appropriate more by thinking on what we read than by reading. When we have read a verse, a line, or any portion that stimulates thought, we should stop and think, and possibly read no farther at that time. Sometimes the first verse in a chapter will shoot a ray of light into the mind and reveal truth in a new way and with new

application. It is then well to stop and to live that day with the new thought. The profit is, not in the reading, but in what the reading brings to us.

2. One should read the Bible for information—to familiarize one's self with the contents of the book. Ignorance of the actual contents of the Bible is amazing. And yet, after years of study, one is continually surprised at the imperfectness of his information. If we master the contents of the Bible as we master other books, we must read the Bible as we read other books, reading a whole book at a sitting—the book of Genesis, or Exodus, or Matthew, or John, etc.

This method of reading is important, not only to master the contents of the book, but also to grasp the purpose and method of different writers. For example, one contrasts Matthew and John, Esther and Jonah, Isaiah and Jeremiah, Job and Proverbs. In this way one is impressed with the different character and varying value of the separate books.

3. Certain portions of the Bible should be studied intensively. Some portions can be adequately understood only by such

study. For example, the full significance of Amos or Hosea is not discerned without knowing the social, political, and religious conditions in Israel at the time. Certain portions of Jeremiah have little meaning for us apart from the background upon which the prophecy is projected.

Such intensive study, of course, takes time, and at least a few books. But with a good Bible dictionary and a few modern commentaries one may make a good beginning. Suppose, for example, one is studying Amos. He will desire information on such questions as, Who was Amos? Where did he live? What was his occupation? What conditions called forth his prophecy? What was the purpose of the prophecy? How was the message received? What application has it to our day? To work through any portion of Scripture in this way gives it a grip on one which nothing else can do, and so fixes it in memory as to make it a lifelong possession.

It is of utmost importance to read the Bible daily. Life is about nine-tenths habit, and we come to neglect the things that are not built into the routine of each day. Daily Bible reading so fixes itself

upon us that we feel as though a meal had been omitted if for any reason it is crowded out. If one reads a small portion of the Bible each day the amount read in a year will be a great surprise. A friend of the author's read through the whole "American Statesmen Series" in a surprisingly short time by reading three times a day during the few moments that he waited for meals. But the greatest advantage of daily reading is that it gives a tone to the spirit with which all wicked things are out of harmony. The Bible becomes the color stone of our spiritual eyes and makes us feel that all other colors must be brought up to it. The daily portion that we read is so much spiritual atmosphere. All baser atmospheres are fetid and foul by contrast.

We should not be troubled if at times the spiritual teachings of the Bible are obscure to us. The Bible is like nature in that the understanding of it is a lifelong process. We understand largely according to our experiences. The mother who sorrows for her child will understand what may be dark to others. Whoever has made great sacrifices will discern what others will miss. The depth and hidden wealth of the Bible

constitute both its perennial interest and its surpassing worth.

Go to the Bible with your need, and your need will be met; go with your discouragement, and you will be cheered; go with your cross, and you will be strengthened; go with your doubts, and you will gain assurance; go with your sins, and you will find rebuke and correction; go repentant, and you will meet forgiveness. At all times you will find God, who by his word will nourish your spiritual life and stimulate you to loving service.

VII

Prayer

PRAYER

Problems of Prayer

The older we grow, the simpler we become, and the more we realize that the best living does not depend upon the solution of all our problems. But young people want problems settled, not realizing that where one problem is settled two spring up in its place. Problems furnish us means of growth. When we have settled some, others project us into larger fields of thought where more difficulties await us. We do not insist upon explanations of digestion and assimilation before eating, upon understanding electricity before lighting the house, or upon mastering the engine before riding in the cars. We should follow the same methods in religion as in the rest of life.

Several definite religious problems are involved in prayer, and it may be well to consider them first.

1. Young men have sometimes said to the writer, "I do not seem to get hold of anything when I pray."

Possibly some make the same mistake about prayer that others make about conversion. Some form ideas of the conversion experience beforehand by hearing the experience of others, and then think that they are not converted unless the other's experience is duplicated in their own. Some likewise form ideas beforehand of the feelings they ought to have in prayer, and then think that prayer is meaningless unless they have those feelings.

In conversion one must make full surrender to God and take whatever experiences come. So also in prayer, one must pour out one's desires and requests to God, irrespective of the feelings one has in doing so. Feelings vary according to physical, mental, and environing conditions. Christ teaches that prayer is based on faith; it rests on confidence in God; and his urgence to prayer, and even to importunity in prayer, would indicate that he has in mind our rising and falling tides of feeling with reference to it and seeks to make resort to him independent of the flow of emotion.

2. "If God knows what we want before we ask," some say, "why ask?"

We are ignorant of *methods of knowing* beyond our own experiences. In human experience, the nearest approach to prayer is the asking of children. They ask parents freely for what they want, and parents respond according to their wisdom and love. Our difficulty here is not one of life but of logic. The parent's knowledge does not preclude the child's asking. Life is not lived by logic. We contrast God with men, saying: "Man is finite, but God is infinite; man is limited in knowledge, but God is omniscient;" and then we presume to establish life relations between ourselves and God upon the logical basis of our own definitions. The method is absurd. Love defies logic; faith ignores logic; even our ordinary thinking processes, when checked up by formal syllogisms, are found to be more than half wrong. Life in a logical straitjacket would be a dwarfed and pigmy thing, whereas it is intended to be free and growing, entering into the personal relations of faith and love where logic is a stranger.

Man has been redefining God from the early centuries of fetishism to the present

time. We are only gradually understanding Christ. It is, therefore, the veriest presumption so to define God as to exclude prayer. The highest elements that we know in God are those seen in Christ—love, solicitude, care, self-giving. Every one of these is directly responsive to prayer, and is seen to be so in Christ. He knew that people wanted to be healed, but in his whole ministry he relieved only two or three until they asked for healing. He knew that people wanted forgiveness, but he never forgave without an expression of faith.

Take all asking of children out of the home, and the reciprocal relations of parents and children would be destroyed; home would be cold, mechanical, and unsympathetic; children would remain undeveloped; the mutual understandings, common purposes, unified motives, unrestrained love, reciprocal helpfulness, and glad cooperation of the family would be impossible. Our natures are so constituted that intercommunication is a necessary method of growth. This is true in home, school, community, nation, and between nations. It is equally true between ourselves and God.

We learn from psychology and sociology

that the mind itself is socially built, that without the mental interrelations and interactions of individuals the mind could not come to normal development. All are familiar with the fact that Helen Keller's mind did not develop beyond that of the merest child until she was brought into communication with the outside world and with other people. If a babe were to be left on an uninhabited island it could not develop mentally into a normal person. Such development comes to the babe by the interaction of parents and child, the interrelations of children with each other, and the associations of people in all walks of life.

In like manner, and under the same laws, our spiritual natures are developed by the interrelations and interactions of the human and divine. The higher and finer faculties of the soul remain dormant and undeveloped until we enter consciously into relations with God.

It is a fact of common knowledge that the rapid progress of modern society is due very largely to improved methods of communication. It is a fact of common knowledge also that a non-praying Christian is a non-growing Christian and a non-work-

ing Christian, while Christians with warm hearts and unflagging zeal in work for others are men and women of prayer. There is little accomplished of a spiritual nature, either within ourselves or through our activities, until we are in free, glad, and trustful communication with God.

It must be concluded, then (1) that we are not warranted, simply on the basis of logic, in attributing to God methods of knowing which lie wholly beyond our experience, and therefore wholly beyond our knowledge; (2) that the nearest relations to prayer that we know are found in the home, between parents and children, and without that which is practically prayer in these relations there could be no proper development either of individual or family; and (3) that the best evidence of the reasonableness of prayer is found in the spiritual vitality and power of men and women who pray. Exceptions, of course, are to be found, but those who are doing the spiritual work of the world are those who pray.

3. Do we, by asking, change God's mind, and get him to do what he had purposed not to do?

This question assumes that God has

figured out beforehand, and decided upon, everything from the beginning to the end of time. For this assumption there is no evidence whatever. All the analogies of life contradict it. The father does not figure out all the conduct of his child beforehand and decide what he will do in view of the child's acts. He lives responsively with his children day by day, and his conduct toward them is determined largely by their conduct.

Christ is constantly urging upon us this human element in God, and insisting that the heavenly Father excels the human father in these reciprocal relations. "If ye then, being evil," he says, "know how to give good gifts unto your children, *how much more* shall your Father who is in heaven give good things to them that ask him" (Matt. 7 : 9-11). If an unjust judge avenge a widow of her adversary because she persists in asking, and is therefore troublesome, *how much more,* Christ insists, will the heavenly Father—of course, from higher motives—answer the prayers of those who call upon him. (Luke 18 : 1-8.)

The highest elements of individuality that we know are human elements. If we

define God at all it must be, not in terms of logic, but by intensifying the highest and best elements in man. These are what we see in Christ—love, care, self-giving. If we define the relations of God to men, it must likewise be, not by logic, but by intensifying and magnifying the highest and best human relations—fellowship, responsiveness, helpfulness. It is precisely this that Christ does when he points to the relations between parents and children and, making them analogous to our relations with God, says, *How much more.*

Even in the Old Testament it is specifically taught that God's actions are contingent on man's actions. If men sin, God will punish; but if men repent and turn from their sins, God will withhold the punishment. (Jer. 18 : 7-10.)

This contingency of God's action upon man's action underlies the whole structure of the New Testament. All rewards and punishments are based upon it. Moreover, it lies in the very constitution of man's mind, and is the only open door to repentance and forgiveness.

As matter of fact, children in the home secure by asking what otherwise they would

not secure. It is not because parents change their minds. Their minds have never been made up upon many things, but from the very nature of the case their decisions remain contingent upon what children do. Asking and receiving are simply the normal relations of parents and children. Electricity is all about us and available for our use, but man's cooperation is necessary before God will use it in driving cars, lighting homes, or sending messages. Man does not change God's mind when he harnesses electricity and makes it do work that otherwise it would not do. On the contrary, he fulfils God's will, for God has made man a coworker with himself. Likewise, prayer does not change God's mind. It is the production of spiritual dynamos, the laying of spiritual wires, the making of spiritual connections. It is man's part in cooperating with God. It does in us, and gets done through us, what else would be impossible.

Jesus Christ, as already stated, wrought most of his miracles in answer to requests, indeed, to pleading prayers. There is no indication that he would have noticed the ten lepers had they not cried out, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us" (Luke 17 :

13). Christ would have passed straight through Jericho, leaving the blind beggar still blind and still begging, had he not cried out for healing. (Mark 10 : 46-52.) In no case was Christ's mind changed by prayers for healing. He longed to heal every one in need of healing. He simply followed the normal methods for which our natures are made, the method which God evidently follows with us, and in which prayer is a working factor. It is a method which relates us to each other in the home and in society, and which relates us to the Father of spirits, a method which is necessary for our spiritual development, and without which we could not be normal spiritual persons.

It must not be forgotten that the greatest good in prayer is, not in what we get by asking, but in conscious fellowship with the divine Spirit which comes by asking and receiving; not in getting what we want from God, but in conscious cooperation of life and work with God. The greatest good in friendship is, not what we get out of our friends by asking, but in the growing processes of friendship-making which come from giving and receiving and all the rela-

tions incident thereto. The greatest good in married life is not in what each gets from the other by asking. Such are but surface things, and usually material things, " which perish with the using." The greatest good lies in the gradual and increasing merging of spirits which comes from the normal processes of asking, giving, receiving, etc.

If now we repeat the question with which we began, " Do we, by prayer, change God's mind? " surely it is evident how shallow the question is, how irrelevant to the real purposes of prayer, and how apart from the normal processes of life.

Prayer is Power

The proper test of prayer is, not whether we receive just what we ask for or not, but the total effect of the attitude and process of prayer upon our lives. The test of family life is, not whether children by asking get just what they want, but whether through the interrelations of parents and children—the asking of children, with requests sometimes granted and as often refused—there is developed in children the best type of life. As indicated above, the virile, hopeful, force-

ful working Christian is a praying Christian. To be persuaded that prayer gives spiritual power, one need only contrast the spiritual influence of those who pray with that of those who do not pray. Prof. William James, our greatest American psychologist, says that prayer is power and actually does spiritual work. This is not a matter of theory or logic, but of actual observation in the laboratory of life.

We should note carefully, however, the difference between observation and experiment. We may observe the power of prayer, both in our life and in the lives of others; but if we experiment with prayer, and make tests to determine its power and efficacy, we destroy the conditions under which prayer does work. It is as though we made a test of love to see if it would refine character. Such test excludes the natural working of love. One cannot make a test of faith to see whether or not it is powerful, for a test implies doubt, and normal faith is not present.

Christ teaches that the prayer of faith will "remove mountains." It is the condition of the joint working of God and man in the spiritual realm; it is the union of the

thought, desire, purpose, and endeavor of the human and divine.

By endeavoring to explain prayer we belittle it and make it a shallow thing. We need to abandon all thoughts of explanation and realize that it is possible for spirits to unite in desire and endeavor, and by uniting to reenforce each other. The heavenly Father can unite his desire and endeavor with those of his children and, by doing so, achieve ends that otherwise could not be secured. Prayer involves all the mysteries of human and divine personalities, but it is a means of fellowship and a source of power; it brings us into cooperation with God; it does work.

Christ's Emphasis on Prayer

Christ prayed. This simple fact ought to sweep away all our puerile reasonings about prayer. Christ knew. He came from the Father, lived in constant fellowship with the Father, performed all his works in cooperation with the Father, and said that without the Father he could do nothing. He is our example and Master. Not that we would blindly follow example or Master,

but Christ's example inspires us with confidence in the vital significance of prayer. We can safely trust and follow him.

While Christ lived in the constant attitude of prayer, we have record of his praying on several crucial occasions: Before choosing his disciples he spent all night in prayer. (Luke 6 : 12.) Before raising Lazarus he prayed, not a prayer of request, but one of thankful fellowship and cooperation with the Father. (John 11 : 41, 42.) At the Last Supper he uttered what is called "the prayer before the cross," a prayer for his disciples, and for those who should believe on him through their word. (John 17.) In this prayer Christ expresses a marvelous interrelation of spirits, really an interpenetration of spirits: "That they all may be one," he prays; "even as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they also may be in us. . . I in them, and thou in me, that they may be perfected into one" (John 17 : 21-23). This union of spirits in purpose and work is the very soul of prayer. Prayer leads to such union, both with God and men. In the garden Christ prayed that the cup of death on the cross might pass from him; but he instantly sub-

mitted himself to the Father's will in the words, "Nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done." And, finally, on the cross he prayed for those who crucified him, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Christ repeatedly urged his disciples to pray. "Ask," he said, "and it shall be given unto you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened" (Matt. 7 : 7, 8).

The Lord's Prayer, as we have come to call it, is the model prayer, and should be carefully studied. (Matt. 6 : 9-13.) There is not a syllable of self-seeking in it. In the heart of the petition there is forgiveness for all mankind—friends and enemies. In the middle of the prayer is a simple request for daily bread. All else implies the union of human spirits with the Father of spirits, and expresses supreme interest in the Father's purpose and work—the hallowing of the Father's name, the coming of the Father's kingdom, the getting done of the Father's will, the overcoming of temptations, and the conquering of sin. The

prayer is breathed through and through with spiritual companionship with the Father—not my Father, but "*our*" Father, the Father of all, rich and poor, strong and weak, learned and ignorant, slave and free, black and white, employer and employed, teacher and pupil. Not one is shut out. "Forgive us our debts," for we are all sinful. Here is expressed a marvelous human fellowship of confession and forgiveness, as well as fellowship with the compassionate Father who forgives. Into such a fellowship no one can enter without becoming purer, worthier, and more spiritually powerful.

Practical Suggestions

1. Our prayers should not be an effort to persuade God to do our way, but rather an effort to find out God's way. To him we should take all our wants, worries, and fears, just as a child takes these to its parents; and then we should receive calmly and thankfully what God is pleased to give. To do this is simply to recognize our own ignorance and limitations, and to put faith in God's wisdom and love. He knows what

is best; we do not know. The older we grow the simpler we become in our prayers as in other things. The importance of praying to our heavenly Father in a childlike way cannot be overemphasized. We should ask for just what we want as children do. Christ lays great emphasis on the childlike spirit; and there is no sweeter human fellowship than that in which we pour out our inmost soul to the intimate friend whom we can absolutely trust. A like relation of fellowship, springing from intimate friendship, should exist between us and our heavenly Father.

2. Prayer ought to be made a daily habit, and cultivated as such. It must not depend upon moods, "lest we forget" and neglect. One often begins to pray in coldness and ends in warmth of spirit, just as one often meets a friend in indifferent mood and goes away enthusiastic. Bringing ourselves into the fellowship of prayer does actual work in us. It purifies our thoughts and desires; it strengthens our resolution; it increases our courage. Just as a discouraged person feels better after a talk with a strong, optimistic friend, because something of the friend's buoyancy and power has

somehow become his, so, after a talk with God, somehow some of the divine vision, desire, and resolution has come into our spirits.

3. One ought to pray any time, anywhere, as immediate need requires. One of the author's football friends said to him, after returning from a hard-fought intercollegiate game: "As our squad trotted out on to the field, with the grand stand cheering us, I just lifted up a prayer that God would help me to play a hard, clean game; and he did." Such prayers keep one consciously in touch with the Spirit of God, and bring to one a constant divine companionship which strengthens resolution, balks temptation, and increases spiritual power.

4. There should be nothing in one's life which one is not willing to take to God in prayer. It may as well be concluded at once that what one cannot pray about is wrong for him. A very beautiful young woman, with a fine contralto voice, a member of a church choir, was offered flattering pay to sing in the choir of a larger church. She was greatly needed in her own church choir, but was singing without pay. Although she did not need the money, she asked her pas-

tor what she ought to do. Her pastor, loath to lose her, and yet not wanting to stand in the way of her advancement, said, "Pray about it, and do what you think God wants you to do."

"Oh," she replied, "I know what I shall have to do if I pray about it."

The incident is typical. We often try to persuade ourselves of the rightness of courses of conduct; we seek to secure from friends advice that will back us up in our desires; whereas, if we should honestly and squarely take the matter to God in prayer, resolved to do his will at whatever cost, things would be settled, and settled rightly, even before our prayers were uttered.

The story of Adam and Eve shows them in the garden hiding from God after they have disobeyed. We all do the same; and it is a credit to our natures that we do so. One is rather brazen when, without shrinking, he can flaunt his sins in the face of God. A friend of the writer's—a Christian of noble spirit, but wont to lose control of his temper—occasionally became angry at his coal-miners, and swore at them. For some time after these outbursts he was not seen in prayer-meeting. It was a credit to

him that he did not feel at home in prayer-meeting until he was ready to confess his wrong-doing. With our sin upon us we always hide from God.

Healthy spiritual life is life in the open, with everything freely confessed to God, and with God gladly consulted about everything. Without constant fellowship with God the Christian life cannot be free, glad, and growing. Like rain and sunshine to the plant, so is unreserved fellowship with God to the growing soul.

Sometimes, even when we are not conscious of anything wrong in our lives, interest seems to die out of prayer. The lethargy of *spiritual idleness* is upon us. We have not "tackled" a big enough job for God. Undertake to win your unconverted chum, classmate, friend, or acquaintance to Christ, and you will be driven to prayer because of the difficulty of the task. No Christian has undertaken a big enough task until he has undertaken a task that is too big—for him alone. Undertake to clean up your fraternity or college athletics, or to set a higher standard of morals in your school, in your company of soldiers, or in your home community, and you will be

driven to your knees by the bigness and difficulty of the task, and you will ask kindred spirits to pray with you. *But one with God is a majority, and nothing is too hard for those who trust and obey him.*

VII

Immortality

IMMORTALITY

THE happier and busier we are today the less we think of tomorrow. In the early centuries of our era, when Christians were persecuted by pagans, and disappointed because Christ did not return as they expected, much attention was given to the next world.

Later generations of Christians, by misinterpreting Revelation, placed the New Jerusalem in heaven instead of on earth, and made it typical of a perfect heavenly condition instead of a perfected earthly society. Until recent times the cataclasmic idea of the world's destiny dominated human thought. For these and other reasons the desire to be "saved in heaven" was the moving purpose of the Christian world for more than a thousand years.

In our day the purpose to be saved in heaven is still present, and ought to be, but our ideas of the relation of this world to the next have been greatly modified. We

have reinterpreted the Scriptures, and see the New Jerusalem coming down instead of going up. We have reread the teachings of Christ and learned that he came, not only to save a few in heaven, but to establish a kingdom of God on earth. We have compared the teachings of the Master with our scientific knowledge and found that both agree in emphasizing gradual processes. Our insistence, therefore, is that Christianity be immediately practical in building God's kingdom, and this we find to coincide with Christ's insistence on ministry.

As a result of these changes the hereafter does not hold its former prominence in Christian thought. We have come nearer to Christ's balance between this world and the next, and we have acquired more of his faith in the heavenly Father's love, which permits us to rest in the assurance that if we live rightly and serve adequately here, our lives hereafter will come into their own as God has purposed. This changed emphasis makes many appear careless about the hereafter, and some actually become indifferent to it.

Out of such conditions the agelong question naturally and inevitably recurs, Is there

a future life at all? "If a man die, shall he live again?"

Immortality not Demonstrable

The temper of our young, scientific age is to demand proof. We are, however, beginning to outgrow this youthful absurdity, since no future event can be scientifically proved. Doctor Jefferson truly says: "You cannot demonstrate that the sun will rise tomorrow morning, nor can it be demonstrated that you will reach your home at the close of this service, nor can you prove that your long-tried friend will be faithful to you five years from now. We build all our life on probabilities. We cannot demonstrate anything beyond the reach of our senses, or the powers of the mind. Death passes beyond our reach."

The deepest and best things in life can never be proved, nor the things of which we are most certain. One cannot prove scientifically that his wife or children love him. Yet his whole nature craves their love, responds to it, rejoices in it, and finds satisfaction and realization through it. No evidence is so certain as this response of one's

nature to some great and fundamental fact. Tennyson says, "Nothing worth proving can be proven, nor yet disproven." Demonstration is simply exhibiting what is experienced. We believe that the sun will rise tomorrow because we have experienced its rising all our lives; but to prove that it will rise again is beyond us. We believe in the law of gravitation because we have experienced it in the past, but we cannot prove that it will continue another hour.

When one seeks to prove to another he simply endeavors to draw the matter within that other's experience. From the very nature of the case immortality cannot be demonstrated. Full proof must wait on experience. Assurance is what we seek. The most certain things are not those formally proved but those discerned by the inner spirit. Man has a soul-sense which cannot be clearly intellectualized. There are some things, and immortality is one of them, so necessary to purposeful existence that our whole nature cries out for them.

Dr. W. N. Clarke puts human experience in regard to immortality in a nutshell when he says: "There are three stages in the matter: the instinctive hope and conviction;

reaction into uncertainty, whether from unspiritual living, from scientific thought, or from struggling with the problems of destiny; confidence regained through higher spiritual experience, especially in Christ. Many rest in the first stage, but many cannot remain there; many see no farther than the second stage, but many cannot remain there; many rest in the third stage, while many cannot yet find it. In the end, nothing but fulness of life will most richly certify endlessness of life."

Belief in Immortality Universal

So universal is belief in immortality that it must be regarded as a spiritual instinct. If there is reason and system in the universe, instincts are indicative of the world without. Wings are not made where there is no medium to fly in; the body is not made to be nourished with food where no food is provided. Eyes are for light, ears for sound, and love for objects of affection. Spiritual instincts likewise indicate a world and a life corresponding to them. The nature of the soul itself is prophetic of existence in which it shall find fulness of life.

Belief in immortality is found as far back as we can go in history, and few if any living tribes are so low in savagery as not to hold the belief in some form. The universal experience of death brings man face to face with the problem as soon as he has acquired power of abstract thought. The conclusion has always been that body and mind are different and separable, and that mind is superior to body.

Conceptions of future life coincide with the degree of civilization that conceives them. The first were crude indeed; the historic forms have been many; but the idea has persisted through all degrees of culture, and has increased in worthiness as man has risen in the scale of life. The course of history is strewn with the wrecks of human error. Dreams have faded; superstitions have died; teachings have been superseded; philosophies have been forgotten; whole systems of thought have been relegated to the mental junk-heap; but the soul's conviction of immortality has cast off its old forms for new ones; it has persisted through all degrees of civilization, all types of thought, all human experiences; it has grown with the growing centuries, linking

this world ever more closely with the next, connecting God ever more fully with the whole life, and making all life increasingly one.

Objections to Immortality

Scientific materialists have sought to make soul inseparable from brain, affirming that the brain secretes thoughts as the liver secretes bile. They have pointed to the fact that the soul develops with the brain—growing into consciousness as the brain grows, showing youthful ideas and judgments when the body is in adolescence, reaching full mental vigor at the age of physical maturity, and exhibiting waning powers when the body grows feeble with age.

That there is a connection between brain and soul, none will dispute, but that such connection is necessary to the soul's existence, by no means follows, and the evidence is decidedly against it.

In the first place, we know the fact of the connection of soul and body for a brief period in this life, but very little about the nature of that connection. Whence comes

the soul itself? Ancestors influence it, but it is different from all ancestors. Whence the genius or prophet? How comes the man in the fulness of time, when history is waxing to a crisis—a Lincoln, a Washington, a Paul, or the Christ? With the single exception of temporary dependence, we are ignorant of the relation of spirit to flesh, and do not know that the connection is a necessary one.

Doctor Jefferson, like many others, makes the brain the *instrument* of the mind. He likens the brain to an organ on which the musician plays. The organ is not the musician, and the connection between the two is not necessary, except to produce music for human ears. The organ does not produce music, but transmits it. The music is in the player. Likewise thought is of the soul, and the brain transmits it and renders it available for us in our present state. Just as an injury to the organ impairs the music, so an injury to the brain impairs thought; but neither the musician nor the thinker is thereby impaired.

The soul is conscious of being different from and superior to the body. It exercises the body, trains it, disciplines it, handles it,

molds it, compels it to undergo sacrifice and punishment. It wrestles to overcome and subdue the body, and is distinctly conscious of victory when successful and of defeat when unsuccessful.

The physiologists tells us that the substance of the body changes every few years, including our brain substance; yet individual consciousness persists through all changes. It would be only a natural sequence for the soul to disengage itself entirely from the body in death, thus casting off the earthly instrument which it has constantly used and repeatedly renewed. The whole life situation points to the connection of soul and body in this world as temporary, and for the purpose of developing the spirit for a higher existence. When we think of what the soul is—its thoughts, aspirations, resolutions, memories, sympathies, loves, antipathies, strivings, and ideals—and contrast it with what the body is, the subjection of soul to body is seen to be absurd, and that the soul should perish with the body impossible.

A second objection to immortality is that we cannot see the spirit depart at death. Strange to say, this objection comes most

frequently from those who have much to do with death—physicians, nurses, undertakers, and those who see much of death in all its ghastliness on battlefields.

This objection is not one of modern science, except when scientists are inclined to materialism. It is an ancient objection and has no scientific basis whatever. Jesus said that the world could not receive the Spirit of truth because it *did not see him.* (John 14 : 17.) Not to believe in spiritual existence because spirits are not seen with physical eyes, indicates little reflection upon the common facts of life. We are conscious of self, but cannot see self; conscious of each other, but cannot see each other's real selves. Indeed, physical nature is filled with mighty forces that we cannot see—electricity, magnetism, gravity, vital force, and scores of others.

Eyes are very crude material instruments, as Jesus indicated when he said that men, having eyes, see not. Even what our eyes tell us of gross physical nature is often wrong and must be corrected by reason. Our eyes tell us that people grow smaller as they recede from us, that streets and railroads grow narrower in the distance,

that a straight stick becomes crooked when placed in water, that the sun moves around the earth, that cities are lifted into the clouds, that there is plenty of water just yonder in the desert, and many other like things. Physical eyes never were made to see spirits. They were not even made to see microbes or distant suns without aid. And with all the aid we can get there are yet many physical things that we cannot see. The eyes are crude instruments to help us over a few physical difficulties, to give us a little pleasure, and to help us to necessary training in a material world. To a spiritual world they are no more related than are tasting, smelling, or feeling. Jesus, referring to the perception of truth, said that spiritual things were spiritually discerned. Likewise the assurance of immortality must come, not through physical eyes, but through the sense of the soul.

Some object that none return from the eternal world. This objection would seem to arise out of unwarranted curiosity, while also implying the demand, above referred to, that we shall see spirits with physical eyes. It fails to apprehend the real nature of life as a whole. Does the butterfly re-

turn to its caterpillar state? Does seed return to blossom, and blossom to bud? Does the grown man return to his prenatal state, or to childhood or youth? Does civilization return to savagery? The processes of life are all forward. For aught we know the spirits of the departed are all about us, though we lack powers to discern them. "No man hath seen God at any time," yet "in him we live and move and have our being."

Others have objected that we cannot conceive of spirits apart from the body. This, however, is no objection to immortality. The human mind is not the measure of the universe. There are multitudes of facts which we are aware of but cannot construe to thought. We become aware of electricity in the lightning flash, in the shock from the wire, or in the lighted house. But apart from these manifestations to our physical sense we cannot construe electricity to thought, and we have no positive knowledge whatever as to the nature of its substance, or even as to whether or not it is substance. After being shown through an electric plant filled with all kinds of machinery for using electricity, the author in-

quired, "What is electricity?" "Nobody knows," was the prompt reply. The atmosphere is filled with it; our bodies hold it; we control it and make it work for us, yet we cannot apprehend it or construe it to thought.

The same is true of all physical forces. We know them only in a few crude manifestations wherein they break through upon our physical senses. How much more is it impossible for us to construe to thought disembodied spirits. We have known them in the crude manifestations of the physical body, and have experienced their mighty power. But to know them apart from the body is as yet beyond us.

Professor James aptly suggests that the human nervous system is like a great window of colored glass which lets in only dim light from the spiritual world, so that when the spirit is out of its temporary fleshly temple it shall see more clearly, instead of being like a candle snuffed out when the body perishes. Such a conception one may easily and reasonably hold without demanding that our limited minds comprehend the methods of spiritual existence. Can we think of our soldier boys giving themselves

in battle for life's highest spiritual values only to perish in the act of thus giving themselves, and to have those values perish in a brief space? The *fact* of immortality, then, we can and do construe to thought; the method of existence of disembodied spirits, we cannot know, need not know, and have no means of knowing.

Scientific Corroboration of Immortality

While there can be no scientific demonstration of immortality, numerous scientific principles and analogies lead toward it.

1. The utter difference between body and spirit, and the transcendence of spirit over body, indicate their different nature and destiny. The fact that the body perishes can be no reason for believing that the spirit perishes. Man is master of his body. He feeds it or starves it, develops it or neglects it, conquers it or becomes slave to it, chastens it or pampers it; but in every case the soul knows itself as superior, and as using the body as dwelling or an instrument.

2. Not only so, but man is master of the material world in which he lives. He

discovers its laws and uses its forces. He makes gravity and electricity do his bidding. He changes his environment and makes it suit his purposes. Land, ocean, and air he makes his servants. To think of such a masterful creature ceasing to be when the bodily instrument is worn out, is to identify instrument with user in an irrational way, and is inconsistent with man's place, power, and prerogative in a universe where he stands at the head.

3. Science knows nothing of the cessation of force. One of its well-established laws is that force may change form—as electricity into heat, heat into light, etc.—but cannot cease to be. Apart from God, what force is greater than the human spirit, which has placed the universe under its feet, discovered its laws, harnessed its forces, and made it obedient in service?

4. Science knows the world of animals and men as urged on in upward progress by instincts. It is a long story, but a fact recognized and taught by science, that the instincts for food, sex, association, self-defense, and others, have worked together, all urging the animal life process upward toward a distant and destined goal.

5. Man is still governed largely by instincts. Reason is his baby faculty, the latest born of them all. When one gives attention to the matter, one is amazed to learn how little our lives are governed by reason and how much by instinctive feelings, appetites, desires, and passions. Our hopes and fears are not dictated by reason, but are often quite contrary to it. The forces which have urged the race up to its present state have been largely instinctive.

Man's highest instinct is his spiritual instinct for immortality. Like love, desire for companionship, faith, and conscience, it has been an instinct of mighty power, urging upward toward a goal, which reason in its infancy cannot make clear.

6. For the spirit to leave the body and assume separate spiritual existence, is to reproduce in a higher realm and different way what is constantly occurring in nature. All living creatures pass through several stages, casting off the old bodies as they pass. On this point Christ cites the death of the seed as a precondition of new grain. The egg is left behind for the larger life. The world of the human embryo is so different from that into which

the babe is born that the translation from this life to the next, while sufficiently close in scientific analogy, would seem to be but rising another step in consistent onward progress.

7. Everywhere in the scientific world imperfection prophesies perfection; and the imperfection of man's powers in this life prophesy another life where they shall realize the fulness of their possibilities. How immature are our reasoning powers! How little our knowledge! How weak our faith! How deficient our insight! How dull our feelings! How weak our wills! Is this the fulness of human realization? Is man to be no more than the mere beginnings of a competent personality, floundering in the universe of which he is the highest product? Are his feelings forever to lead him astray and betray him to his weaknesses? Is he forever to fail of the highest to which he aspires? Is he to be forever immature, and never to acquire other than a wavering course in life, to be forever without adequate goal and worthy destiny? Science can produce no evidence against immortality, and many facts in nature point directly to it.

Personal Immortality

Some, while admitting eternal life, deny continuance of personal conscious existence. The conscious individual, some hold, is absorbed back again into God.

Of such process of absorption we know absolutely nothing. One can influence another, but cannot hand himself over, or be taken over, to be absorbed by another. To make such statements is to use words without meaning.

On the contrary, our experience is that the growing soul becomes ever more differentiated from other souls, and ever more firmly established in its separateness. The processes of life are away from absorption, and point to perpetuity of individual existence.

Some would make us eternal only in that our influence continues forever. Doctor Fosdick calls attention to the fact that scientists have demonstrated that there are seven ways in which this planet may be destroyed, and that in time it must be destroyed in one of these seven ways. It is, of course, needless to talk about the continuance of personal influence after this planet and the race

of men upon it have been destroyed. This pronouncement of science renders the eternal influence theory absurd. Without personal immortality the universe is laboring for naught; it is bringing souls to a high state, snuffing them out, and destroying all traces of their influence. Man, as the crowning product of the universe, must find consummation and goal in permanent personal values. It is unthinkable that the highest achievement of the whole evolutionary process should be destroyed in the making. The forces of evolution push toward the psychic, and increasingly build personality. Their adequate achievement can be nothing less than personal immortality.

To personality both here and hereafter, Christ gave supreme value, and his valuation has been one of the dominant forces in social development from his day to the present. It has given impetus to democracy, inspiration to social service, and warrant to our convictions that every individual has a right to worthful life.

Well does Martineau say: "I do not know that there is anything in nature (unless, indeed, it be the reputed blotting out

of suns in the stellar heavens) which can be compared in wastefulness with the extinction of great minds: their gathered resources, their matured skill, their luminous insight, their unfailing tact, are not like instincts that can be handed down; they are absolutely personal and inalienable; grand conditions of future power, unavailable for the race, and perfect for an ulterior growth of the individual. If that growth is not to be, the most brilliant genius bursts and vanishes as a firework in the night."

The forces of the universe do not thus end in negation. The long processes of evolution do not reach their climax in destroying the personality which they have labored to produce. John Fiske says that to deny the everlasting spiritual element in man is to rob the whole process of evolution of its meaning, and that no one has, or is likely to allege, sufficient reason for such denial.

Immortality the Only Adequate Sanction for Morals

Let any who doubt immortality consider the alternative. It is not sufficient simply

to object. One should replace objection with constructive philosophy. When anything can neither be proved nor disproved one has a choice of beliefs, and is under obligation to choose the best. One should choose the optimistic, forward-looking, and uplifting attitude, that attitude which fits the soul at its best, which gives rationality, worthfulness, and purpose to the world, which makes God wise and just, and which gathers up and preserves for one all that is most precious in life.

If one choose to believe that he dies like a beast he will live like a beast. Belief in immortality is the mightiest moral leverage in civilization, involving belief in laws of God that must be obeyed, and a difference between right and wrong that yields different deserts and brings to different ends.

The question is not that of doing right for reward, or of refraining from wrong through fear of punishment, but of the recognition of a difference between right and wrong that is fundamental and eternal because right and wrong build characters fundamentally and eternally different. Without belief in such distinction, and that such distinction inheres in God, and must

be recognized in life, we could not build moral character at all. Let it be remembered that belief in eternal life has been central to the whole process of human development. If that faith should suddenly disappear, doubtless the momentum of ideas, feelings, habits, and customs, would carry us on for a time on much the same level that we have reached. And yet even this is doubtful. Dr. Harry Pratt Judson, after returning from a mission to the Near East, said: "I saw in Batum and parts of Transcaucasia many refugees from Bolshevism. I don't know whether we know what Bolshevism means. Some people may think it is not so bad. But I saw many who had suffered from it. It meant robbery, it meant murder, it meant treachery, it meant they always murdered priests in the church when they found them. It meant one time that they took an archbishop and burnt him over a slow fire and called on him to get his God to work a miracle for him, if he could. It meant that they have organized the schools on the basis of atheism and have organized regular courses in atheism, so the children are taught there is no God. It means the destruction of all our standards of morals."

So soon do men deteriorate when they relinquish belief in immortality! What would be our state of morals today if no one had ever believed in life after death, but instead, all had always believed that death ended conscious life. In considering so momentous a matter the thoughtful person will not be a mere objector or disbeliever. He will push his objections to their logical conclusion, and interpret their effects upon the lives of men in case all men believed, and always had believed, as he does.

Man's moral nature requires immortality for its proper development. Just as the boy cannot live an adequate boy's life except in expectation of oncoming manhood, no more can man live an adequate moral life apart from expectation of life after death. Apart from anticipated manhood the boy lives simply in the desires and joys of youth without taking upon himself those disciplines apart from which adequate manhood is impossible. So also, without anticipation of immortality man lives simply in the desires and satisfactions of this life, without taking upon himself those disciplines apart from which moral manhood is impossible—the fear and love of God, obedience to the

will of God, loyalty to the right, and self-sacrifice for principle. In a word, no part of life can be lived adequately unless life in its totality comes, if not within view, at least within the grasp of faith, so that every part of life is lived in the consciousness of the whole of life—its worthfulness, its possibilities, its eternal nature, and its relation to God. Human nature is made to a scale so large that this world can neither contain nor satisfy it. It demands immortality to make it consistent and give it warrant.

Apart from eternal life Emmanuel Kant found no justification for our obedience to conscience. The foundation of morals is accountability, the conviction that we sow what we reap, and that we live in a universe that is just. In this world we often see the wicked flourishing "like the green bay tree"; we see men "sowing the wind" without "reaping the whirlwind"; we see right on the scaffold and wrong on the throne. Justice is out of balance. It goes without saying that righteous men cannot be built in a world constituted in seeming unrighteousness. Reference is here, not only to the injustice which men perpetrate, but to the ruthlessness of natural forces—the earth-

quake, the flood, the famine, the pestilence, the cyclone, the lightning stroke, and many other such calamities. This world, viewed apart from an eternal world, is unjust, sometimes fickle, often cruel, and is not an adequate basis of, or discipline for, moral character.

If this life is the whole of man's life, a proper and adequate philosophy would be, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die"; let us get the most and give the least, for there is no one to call us to account, no final sifting of life's values, no building into character of higher elements to be preserved eternally, no assurance that this life is disciplinary for life beyond life. Such a world could not possibly build moral men.

On the other hand, man's nature is in harmony with the other view of the world—the educative and disciplinary view. In sinning there is a sense of loss of the higher life; in sacrificing for righteousness there is a sense of gain, achievement, and victory. Christ's saying, "He that saveth his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it," is not a dictum of philosophy, but an expression of the soul's deepest experience. This consciousness of

the value of self-achievement through righteousness finds its warrant in eternal life.

Some object that immortality is made a reward for righteousness, whereas righteousness should be sought for its own sake. "Righteousness for its own sake" is words without meaning. Righteousness is never sought for its own sake, even by those of highest aspirations, to say nothing of the rank and file, but always because it is related to one's own life, and to the lives of others, and is worthful in those relations. We do not look upon life next week as a reward for decent living this week. We view life this week and next as one, and we are decent this week because we expect to live with ourselves and others next week. The anticipated life of tomorrow always gives the major significance to the life of today, not as reward—and yet it is reward—because life is one, continuous, and because the worth of life tomorrow is always determined by the character of life today. According as I do right or wrong today I expect to look myself in the face or be ashamed of myself tomorrow. And according as I live worthily here I expect life to be worthful hereafter. It is life here-

after that gives moral significance to life here.

"Immortality," says Doctor Denney, "is a stupendous idea when we really take it in; and to grasp it as not merely an idea but a reality implies spiritual strength on a corresponding scale." How shall they believe in immortality who have not the quality of life that is immortal? Spiritual things are spiritually discerned. The artist is the only one who fully appreciates the value of art and is strongly moved by it. Those who do not discern and appreciate spiritual values are not much inclined toward immortality; and inclination and desire are three-fourths of persuasion. "The man who has nothing in life he would die for has nothing in life worth living for; and the life that is not worth living will never believe in its own immortality."

Immortality and high moral character are twin parts of the same conception of life. They are necessary each to the other; they have come down through history together; and the nobler our conceptions of immortality become the intenser grow our aspirations for excellence of character. Doctor Snowden truly says: "The immortality of

the human soul has ever been one of the great hopes of the world, extending almost as wide and deep as the consciousness of the race, engaging the thought of the profoundest thinkers, poets, and prophets, producing some of our noblest literature, furnishing the main ground and goal of religion, building strong and fine character, and comforting the human heart in its deepest and darkest sorrows; and it has not withered under the light of modern knowledge, but is still a living problem of religion, science, philosophy, and popular interest."

Death and Immortality Enrich Life

While there is not space here to discuss the matter, it could easily be shown that death, coupled with faith in immortality, brings into life values of highest significance for individual character and human relationships. One has said: "The seriousness of death is the consecration of life, the strength of love, the spur to action. . . Should we have religion and philosophy if there were no death? Should we have a sense of seriousness and urgency of life if there were no death? Should we have an effective ad-

monition to give life its highest worth, to improve the time, to fill the world with good deeds, if there were no death?"

Let one picture to himself two worlds: one filled with men who deny the Christian conception of God, and believe that death ends all; the other, a world where men gather in their places of worship and sing "Praise God, from whom all blessings flow," and pray "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me," a world in which men plan and work to build society on the principles of Jesus Christ, confident that when life and work here are ended, there awaits them the "Well done, good and faithful servant." One is picturing two very different worlds: one filled with inspiration and hope, and with a sense of life's worthfulness; the other, a world of gloom, doubt, fear, and pessimism. Not only has faith in immortality filled life with life's richest and best, but the assurance of immortality itself is life's best, the master achievement of personality, which gives to life its supreme value and bears eloquent testimony to the worth of the individual as a son of God. So closely is immortality connected with

life's highest and best that, as Doctor Clarke says, "All low, worldly, and unspiritual life tends toward doubt of it, and all high living tends to belief in it."

The Lowly Origin of Immortality

Some would discredit immortality by pointing to the lowly origin of the idea, to lack of agreement in conceptions of immortality, and to the fact that present conceptions have been molded largely by human experience.

These facts, on the contrary, greatly increase the certainty of immortality. What great truth of philosophy, religion, science, or government has not had a similar history? Every conception of the human mind was crude at its birth. Each has passed through many changes, been purged of many errors, and brought to worthier forms by experience. This is our necessary method of acquiring knowledge; and the more fundamental the problem, the longer and the more tedious are the processes of arriving at the truth. Consider our conception of God, our understanding of Christ, our deepening sense of human brotherhood,

our ideals of individual and social character, and our valuation of truth and righteousness—each was crude at first; each has had its battles with error; all have become more worthy and adequate as the race progressed.

The Inadequacy of this World

When one considers the human race in this world either from the standpoint of self-realization or of social adequacy, men are seen to be much like children at play. What immaturity we reveal! What folly we perpetrate! How we injure both ourselves and others! What delusions and misconceptions we entertain! How short-sighted we are! From what unworthy motives we act! How the satisfactions we seek escape us! How much we labor to no purpose! How we fail of right development and high attainment!

Such facts stamp this world as life's kindergarten, with but beginnings of individual development, and only first attempts at social adjustments. The love that makes individual joy full, that unifies human desires and aspirations, and binds us all together

by binding us all to God, is in bud. Its bloom and maturity are in the eternal world. In this world fulness of pleasure does not satisfy; wealth does not satisfy; nothing simply of this world satisfies. The most learned are most keenly aware of their ignorance; the most righteous are the most self-accusing; those whom we hold dearest are snatched away by death. When we have taken from this world the most that it holds for us, all is yet in process, nothing is finished. We stand facing a future where knowledge will be completed, righteousness attained, and love made perfect.

Man's undying passion for life is the voice of immortality in his soul. We tenaciously cling to life in this world notwithstanding its work and worry; and we equally cling to the hope of life after death in the face of all its mysteries and uncertainties. Toward the close of his life, nothwithstanding his materialistic views, Thomas Huxley confessed his shrinking from annihilation, and said that he had sooner be in hell than annihilated. How could a man, conscious of noble talents, high attainments, and soul-power and worth, feel otherwise? Finely did Victor Hugo voice the passion of noble

souls when at seventy he wrote: "Winter is on my head, and eternal spring is in my heart. The nearer I approach the end, the plainer I hear around me the immortal symphonies of the worlds which invite me."

When the body is worn out and feeble with sufferings, we long to enter that life where youth shall be renewed again in higher form; when friends and loved ones have gone before us, and this world is grown lonely, we long to rejoin them, that love may be kindled anew and burn with purer flame; when we have grown wise with so much learning that the mysteries of life have multiplied and deepened on every hand, we yearn for that life where the veil shall no longer be on our faces and we shall see clearly and know fully. Here we believe, trust, love, and serve, but in and through all is the larger hope. All life processes take us by the shoulders and face us toward the future, where life at length shall be complete.

God's Love Guarantees Immortality

If there were no God of love we could believe that there is no immortality. But a

God who would create such a world as ours apart from immortality, who would develop life by such a long, tedious process, and who would make man to reach only imperfection while filled with instincts and aspirations for perfection, would be a cruel or an impotent God, uncaring or unable to complete his creation and bring it to worthy issue.

"It is an intolerable thought," wrote Darwin, "that man and all other sentient beings are doomed to complete annihilation after such long-continued slow process."

Although we live in a world of great injustice and manifest wrong, we rightly regard God as a loving Father, for Jesus teaches that there is a world hereafter where the eternal balances are struck. In order to believe in God's goodness we must view this world as disciplinary and educative.

With great force Jesus taught that God's love was the guaranty of immortality: God so loved the world that he sent Christ to bring men to eternal life. (John 3 : 16.) None should be able to pluck out of the Father's hands those who are joined to Christ in love. (John 10 : 28, 29.)

Paul pours out his soul in eloquent thanksgiving for assurance of eternal union with the loving God when he exclaims, "For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8 : 38, 39).

This experience of God's love is the common experience of Christians, an experience without which repentance and forgiveness have no meaning. The common experience of alienation from God through sin, and of turning from sin to God, is an experience of God's love as real, and as vivid to consciousness, as is love of husband or wife, parent or child. God's love and immortality coincide so inevitably each with the other as to make them phases of the same great truth—that man is God's child, created in his image, and cannot be separated from him while love abides.

God's love and Christ's love bind us in an eternal circle of love with family and friends. "Because I live," says Christ, "ye shall live also." Now, though the mother

lays her child in the grave, the stone is rolled away; there is a resurrection morning. Though children consign their parents to the dust, they "are not there," they "are risen." Those who have loved and feared and hoped and prayed for them have not ceased to be. To make this circle of love only a temporary and passing thing is to mock the very soul of life. God's love and Christ's love are unfailing pledges of immortality.

Christ's Attitude to Immortality

For two thousand years the determining forces of social evolution have been those which emanated from the life, work, and teachings of Jesus Christ. The quality of his life is recognized as that for which all should strive; his teachings constitute a philosophy of life which is a continuous revelation, and toward which society is steadily moving; his work has won men from animalism, filled them with a new dynamic, and set them to work making a better world. These forces are as cosmic in the world of men as are light, heat, and electricity in the physical world. They have

determined the direction of civilization's progress, and filled it with power for the unfolding of higher life.

It is of first importance, then, in any discussion of immortality, to note what Jesus Christ says about it. What he says is of greater significance than what all others say.

Every utterance of Christ's on immortality is characterized by absolute assurance of its reality and supreme worth, as the following passages amply indicate: "I came out from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father" (John 16 : 28). "We speak that which we know, and bear witness of that which we have seen" (John 3 : 11). "Before Abraham was, I am" (John 8 : 58). "If I go and prepare a place for you, I come again, and will receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14 : 3). These words, and many others which Christ uses, point directly to personal immortality and spiritual fellowship. Christ draws picture after picture of heaven: "And I say unto you," he says, "That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abra-

ham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 8 : 11). He shows us Lazarus comforted in Abraham's bosom and Dives tormented in hell, with a great gulf fixed between the two. (Luke 16 : 19-31.) He pictures the righteous on his right hand and the wicked on his left, with himself as judge; and from his lips we hear the words, "Come, ye blessed" and "Depart from me, ye cursed" (Matt. 25 : 34, 41). Again and again, with sentences as authoritative as a king's proclamation, he teaches life eternal, and the separation of the righteous from the wicked: "These (the wicked) shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal" (Matt. 25 : 46). "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3 : 16). "He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; but he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3 : 36).

When Christ does not speak of life hereafter in pictures, his favorite contrast is between life and death: "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth on

me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die" (John 11 : 25, 26). Crowning all other assurances of immortality, are Christ's clear and positive teachings. He knew.

Christ's Resurrection and Immortality

It is not the fashion today to cite Christ's resurrection in proof of immortality, since the resurrection itself must be proved. This, however, is too great a yielding to shallow modern skepticism. Paul said: "If Christ be not risen, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins" (1 Cor. 15 : 17). He makes Christ the first-fruits of the resurrection, and his resurrection the guaranty of ours. (1 Cor. 15 : 23.) To the same purpose Christ said, "Because I live, ye shall live also" (John 14 : 19).

This challenge, laid down to men's faith by Christ and Paul, should not be ignored in our thought of immortality. All arguments are in favor of Christ's resurrection, and there is not a single argument that will stand against it.

"The resurrection is contrary to experi-

ence," men say. So also in its time were riding by steam-power, lighting by electricity, flying in heavier-than-air machines, governments of, by, and for the people, and international leagues for the common good. So is every marked advance in world progress. Indeed, progress means the appearances of things contrary to experience.

Christ's resurrection is proved by ample testimony, by the sudden change in his discouraged disciples, by the spread of the gospel on the basis of the resurrection, and by the fact that the dynamic in Christianity for two thousand years is belief that Christ rose from the dead and is a living Christ. Without this faith the church today would lose its power; Christianity would lose its passion; and missionary endeavor would cease. Faith in Christ's resurrection is the very soul of Christianity. Those who with Paul believe that Christ was proved to be the Son of God by the resurrection from the dead, have done the spiritual work of the Christian centuries.

Christ's resurrection is in perfect harmony with his claims, his teachings, his power to renew men, his determination of the world's progress, and his present posi-

tion as the goal toward which the human race is moving.

Men are moved by facts, live, luminous facts; and Christ alive from the dead is the most precious and powerful fact in the modern world to direct the social evolutionary process forward and upward. It is also, and by the same token, the best guaranty of immortality. Whoever comes into vital relations with Christ becomes aware in himself of a life so filled with noble aspiration and endeavor that it is worthy to live forever, and will need to live forever to realize its possibilities.

The Nature of Eternal Life

Christ never argued the question of conscious personal life hereafter. He took it for granted. As already stated, his favorite contrast on the subject was between life and death. This contrast is perhaps the most informing for us today, since we think in vital rather than pictorial terms. Some men live simply for the physical, and give no place in their lives to the spiritual, thus quenching their better impulses and leaving their moral faculties undeveloped. What

satisfactions could there be for such persons in a spiritual world without physical bodies? Physical appetites and passions, though psychically conditioned, must have flesh and blood through which to express themselves and find enjoyment. There can be no heaven for one whose spiritual faculties are atrophied.

On the inside wall of the Campo Santo in Pisa, Italy, is a fresco of hell dating from about the fourteenth century. Around a table loaded with good things to eat, stand a group of pot-bellied men. They are ravenously hungry, but they cannot eat, for they are in the spirit world and without physical bodies. On earth they were gluttons, and their greatest enjoyment, the satisfying of the physical appetite. Now appetite remains, but satisfaction is impossible. They are therefore in torment, for they have failed to develop spiritual faculties suited to life in a spiritual world.

The fresco is certainly suggestive. In this world we witness in some the overdevelopment of physical appetites and passions, and the withering of spiritual faculties, until men are "dead in trespasses and in sins." In others we see spiritual facul-

ties gradually unfolding and making life beautiful and strong. Thus the laws of the soul corroborate Christ's teachings, that man's eternal state is primarily one of spiritual life or death.

From the above it is evident that eternal punishment holds no element of vindictiveness, but results inevitably from the laws of the soul.

Christ describes the life of the righteous hereafter in terms of this world's best, for there is no other language in which to convey it. He pictures feasts for the hungry, mansions for the poor, thrones for oppressed subjects, judgment-seats for the wronged, and life with Christ for those who love him. Such terms, of course, are the language of earthly experiences and desires. They give assurances in terms that we can understand of abounding life and blessedness.

Our civilization is saturated with faith in and desire for eternal life. Religion is rooted in it; art glorifies it; literature radiates it; the graves of our dead bloom with hope of it; and the morals of the noblest of the race are aligned to its demands. No conviction that men hold con-

stitutes such a mighty force in the process of evolution as that of the immortality of the human soul. It gives worth to every individual, renders to righteousness its true and full significance, makes it worth while to battle for the highest character, lays upon every man the responsibility of helping others to worthful lives, fills with adequate significance the life and work of Christ, and binds us all to God and to each other in one spiritual family. It gives us a God that we can truly reverence and sincerely love; and it places us in a rational universe where human experiences are susceptible of worthy and purposeful interpretation.

VIII

The Church

THE CHURCH

BY the church is meant a company of Christians organized for the purpose of propagating the gospel. The propagation, of course, may take different directions and have different phases of emphasis. Some groups of Christians, organized as churches, emphasize evangelism, others education, others social work, and some still other phases of religious life and activity.

The first Christian churches were composed of the disciples of our Lord and those who were added as the gospel was preached. The mother church was at Jerusalem, and for a time all smaller churches looked to her for more or less guidance. To the Jerusalem church Peter reported after securing converts in the household of Cornelius. (Acts 11.) To it Paul gave account of his work, bringing problems from churches which he had founded, and to it he carried a collection for the help of poor members. (Acts 15; 1 Cor. 16 : 1-8.) Paul

established churches at Antioch in Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe, Ephesus, Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Corinth, and possibly other places.

As the centuries swept on, Rome, the dominant city of the Mediterranean world, became the chief church center, with pope, bishops, priests, and other functionaries, and with centralized control over practically all lesser churches. Under this régime the church became known as the Roman Catholic Church. This same type of organization has continued through all succeeding centuries and continues today for all Catholics.

From the first tendencies toward centralization, however, the Christians of the Eastern Mediterranean challenged the authority of Rome, and a second center of power was finally established at Constantinople, resulting at length in the separation of eastern and western Catholics, the eastern branch being called Greek Catholics, and the western, Roman Catholics.

From the sixteenth century onward the western Christian world has been characterized by numerous reformations and revivals, resulting in the separation of the

Lutheran and Episcopal Churches from the Roman Catholic Church, and subsequently in the separation, for various reasons, of other denominations, principally from the Lutheran and Episcopal Churches.

The Church a Growing Institution

From the above brief historic sketch it is evident that through all the centuries the church has grown. Everything alive grows—governments, schools, industries, churches.

Christ repeatedly likened the kingdom of God to growing things—the mustard-seed; the wheat and tares growing together; the sower sowing on all kinds of soil, and reaping harvests accordingly; the earth bringing forth fruit of itself, first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear; the tree in need of fertilizing; and the vine in need of pruning.

Churches, like all institutions organized and run by human beings, are imperfect. Even the disciples of our Lord were not all saints. Judas betrayed Christ; Peter denied him; Thomas doubted; and James and John were unduly ambitious. Imper-

fection is involved in the process of growth, whether of individual character, understanding of Christ, or social organization.

There are those who stand aloof from the church, insisting that it should get its doctrines and forms of worship fixed. As well expect a growing boy to stay fixed physically, mentally, and morally; as well expect society in general to stay fixed in thought, ethical ideas, and moral achievements.

Within every organization that grows there are elements of instability and conflict; and if it be a human organization, there are also elements of unrest and discontent. Churches are no exception. Only dead things stay fixed.

If the church is what Christ expected it to be, it will never cease growing, but will improve its doctrines, better its forms of worship, refine its ethical standards, and enlarge its service. Growth is the inevitable result of ampler understanding of Christ's spirit and mission.

There are those who, before joining a church, would have all "inconsistent Christians" cast out. It is, of course, to be regretted that any church-member does not live in all respects an exemplary Christian

life; but on this point a number of things need to be said.

1. Men who complain of inconsistent members in the church, often fellowship these same inconsistent persons in their lodges, and do so under solemn oaths of brotherhood.

2. One's view-point should not be that of fear of personal contamination, but rather of desire for helpful relationships. Christ never considered how he could keep himself clean, but rather how he could do others most good, set them a right example, exhibit before them a humble, helpful spirit, win them from their sins, and inspire them to heroic righteousness.

3. Those who see the imperfections of the church are those who can best help the church to higher ground and enable it to render more effective service; and they can help more by working constructively within than by criticizing destructively from without.

4. Between old and young there is always more or less of conflict, and ought to be. Age is conservative while youth is progressive. In school work young professors urge the adoption of new methods while

aged ones cling to old ways. On the farm the children want an automobile while father insists that horse and buggy are good enough. In business the young partner overhauls the plant and installs new machinery. So also in the church, the young never think quite like the aged. They differ somewhat doctrinally; they also see new needs and insist on new methods.

5. Young life is the hope of the church. Without it the church would soon perish, not only because the old die, but because without the young the church is incapable of adapting itself to present conditions and becoming effective in service.

6. Every young Christian ought to join the church—some church—and give it the benefit of his vigorous young life in a constructive way. This duty was never more imperative than now owing to our rapidly changing times. Religious institutions are the most conservative, and it is well that they are so; but our times are moving with such extraordinary rapidity, and readjustments must be made so speedily, that young life in the church is indispensable. Christ's call today is preeminently to the young, for the hurrying century is in their hands.

All Life Organizes

Like all other life, Christian life organizes. There is a difference between a plant and soil-elements, sunshine, and moisture; between a crowd and a nation; between a mob and an army—the difference of *organization*. Plant life organizes soil, sunshine, and moisture into plant structure; national life organizes millions of immigrants into orderly society; military life organizes a mob into an army.

Our whole social and economic structure is a system of interrelated organizations—families, schools, fraternities, clubs, churches, Christian associations. Even boys' gangs have leaders and crude forms of organization. A really live Christian will either join a religious organization or form one. Failure to do one or the other is a practical denial of one's religion, for all life organizes. One with a purpose joins others of like purpose. One who takes Christ as Master joins others to do Christ's work. One with Christ's spirit seeks those of kindred spirit.

For twenty centuries the church has done a great work, and it never faced more im-

perative tasks than it does today. Why should any one stay out of the church, criticize, and shirk responsibility while others do the work?

Church Union

Some complain of so many churches and insist that there should be but one. For this reason they hold aloof from all churches. This attitude comes fundamentally from failure to understand the nature of historic organizations.

Since differences between many churches are slight and relatively unimportant, it is apparent that they could not originate as separate denominations today. Each individual church is the perpetuation of a denomination organized hundreds of years ago, and for the best of reasons. Lutherans separated from Catholics in protest against ritualistic salvation and corruption in the mother Church. Congregationalists separated from Episcopalians in protest against the dominance of episcopacy and to assert the principles of democratic government. Methodism was a protest against the dearth of spirituality in the State

Church. Baptists insisted upon regenerate church-membership when the common belief was that to be on the church-roll insured salvation.

Likewise each denomination has taken its several way historically because at the time of its beginning there was needed some effective protest against a wrong principle or insistence upon some neglected truth. What such separations, with consequent diversity of emphasis, insistence upon religious liberty, and embodiment of many-sided truth, has meant to the world will become evident to thoughtful men if they seek answers to the questions: How different is the world today from what it would have been if the Catholic Church had been able to compel everybody within its fold? And what is the difference between Catholic and Protestant countries—to name typical instances, between the United States and South America or Mexico, between Spain and England?

In many instances the truth championed at first by one denomination has come to be championed by all denominations. For example, while historically Baptists have championed the separation of Church and

State, all Protestant bodies now insist upon such separation.

But if truths formerly championed by single denominations have now become the belief and heritage of all, why continue separate denominations? Thoughtful, earnest people are asking this question, and it deserves a fair and full answer. There is room here for only a few considerations.

1. Doubtless there are too many denominations; doubtless also a few denominations are better than only one. Politics are best when there are two or three parties; brotherhood is fostered most when there are many societies working in sympathy—Masons, Odd Fellows, Modern Woodmen, and others; science and philosophy bring most light to the world when several schools are at work on different theories; art of all kinds—painting, sculpture, music, literature—is wonderfully helped by new schools of art appearing to criticize some weakness or emphasize something neglected in the old schools. Christian truth is fuller orbed today, and Christians are busier than otherwise they would be, because churches differ in convictions of truth and methods of work. Moreover, different churches exer-

cise a selective process which is beneficial in securing membership. Some like formal worship, others do not; some like evangelistic services, others abhor them; some are conservative, others aggressive; some are dogmatic, others liberal; some emphasize doctrine, others social service. To crowd these divergent tastes, propensities, and convictions into one church and expect harmony and cooperation, is to ignore the human element and to overlook the fact that the principles of association in the church are the same as those in all other social groups.

2. Denominations *are drawing closer together,* and already some have organically united, for example, the Free Baptists with the Baptists. This drawing together is seen in the cooperation of local churches for civic betterment, in the dividing of missionary territory to prevent overlapping, in growing refusal to overchurch small towns, and in the thoroughgoing cooperation of all Protestant churches in the work of the Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations.

3. Those who are overeager for church union are apt to consider only their local

situations. They wonder what holds churches apart, seemingly unaware of the mighty sweep and power of world-wide denominations, of which local churches are but the smallest units of organization.

One might almost say that denominations are in the way of the union of local churches. That is, not infrequently the churches of a town could and would unite but for the fact that each of them is a constituent part of a great denomination. Shall a church cast off the mother who bore her? Shall it forget its historic traditions and its heroic martyrs? Shall it renounce the fellowship in which it has been nurtured? Shall it bury its institutional love and pride? Shall it turn away from missionary enterprises at home and abroad, dedicated by the sacrifices often of fathers and mothers, relatives and friends, and always by the consecration of heroes of the cross whom through all the years it has been taught to admire and applaud? If local churches could be pulled up by the roots, each out of its denomination, union would be greatly simplified. But it is just this rootage which gives strength to denominations as well as to local churches. But for this rootage thousands

of small churches would cease to exist where they are needed, and other thousands never would be planted where the need is greatest. But for this rootage also there could not be great denominations carrying on home mission work and foreign mission work, planting educational institutions and establishing publication houses, sending out evangelists and cooperating in Christian Association work, meanwhile collaborating together in nation-wide and world-wide movements for economic amelioration, social uplift, moral improvement, and spiritual renewal. Denominational organizations reach every large city, have centers in every State in the Union, and literally encircle the globe. They have billions invested in institutions and equipment and scores of thousands of men trained and at work.

What we have thus tried to bring into view has required hundreds of years to produce. Every denomination has acquired historic momentum that cannot be suddenly stopped without great disaster and loss.

As indicated above, many changes have already taken place which are uniting Christians of all denominations in common belief, purpose, and endeavor. It would be a

calamity for churches to unite any sooner than they can come together in fundamental convictions, for people without convictions are without power. Without conviction Christians will never win the world for Christ.

The hope of churches coming closer together lies in their cooperation in work. Those who plan, work, and sacrifice in mutual tasks draw together in sympathy, understanding, and point of view. There is abundant opportunity for churches in all of our towns to cooperate in Christian enterprises for the good of the community. What are our churches doing for the boys and girls of the town? What are they doing to furnish wholesome and uplifting amusements? What are they doing to provide for clean and safe social life, not simply for their own young people, but in a civic way for those who do not come to church? What are they doing to organize and direct the play of the town? What are they doing in night-schools for those who cannot attend school by day? Should the churches not unite in providing and manning a community house, or something akin to it? Should they not unite in

an effort to Christianize their community in an outgoing way far beyond anything yet attempted, Christianize it, not simply by preaching and Sunday School, but through all the channels by which young people are reached, interested, and appealed to. Modern community service is many-sided. It is too great a task for any one church. From its very nature it is a task for the cooperation of all churches.

One is simply waiting for death who stands aside, complaining of too many churches and waiting for them to unite. One should join some church and work from within to get all the churches busy on some big, needed task. Cooperation in work will unite the hearts of the churches; and when in a few score years or a few centuries they are found organically united, the organization will doubtless be different from any organization of the present day.

Students and the Church

It is common for a college student not to identify himself with the church in his home town because it is weak, and composed possibly of only a few aged people.

He plans that when he goes to college he will join one of the large churches where many young people are members.

In his home town the younger boys look up to him as a sort of hero because he goes away to school. They notice that he "has no use for" the little church at home, and they follow the lead of their hero, who, sad to say, is failing in the very place where his influence is greatest.

The one who thus neglects the church is lacking, not only in vision, but also in courage. He lacks vision because he fails to see that those, whoever they may be, who support the churches of a community, are the ones who care for the moral and spiritual life of the community, who are striving to make conditions safe for the young, who believe that the life and teachings of Christ are of vital significance for the world, and who are striving to give both the community and the world the benefit of them. He is lacking in courage because he is unwilling to stand with the few in his home community who have the spiritual and moral interests of the community at heart, because he is unwilling to put his Christian life into the church where it

would be a power to pull others toward Christ, because he refuses to give the church the benefit of his talents, his youthful vigor, his education, and his broadened experience, and because he is satisfied to bury his life in a large church where the need is not so great.

I am not here writing of technical church-membership—of where one's church letter is held, or where one's name is recorded—but of the open and glad identification of one's life with the life of the church that is striving to do God's work in a community according to its best wisdom and power. Above all things, one should avoid being a snob in religion.

Some hesitate to identify themselves with the church because they cannot consent to all its doctrines. Strange, indeed, must be one's doctrines if, with so many denominations, one cannot find a church which he can conscientiously join and support.

It is the author's conviction that no Christian church has ever appeared in history that did not have some message that the world needed. We are accustomed to say that we have too many churches, and it would seem so; but the important thing

is, not the reduction of the number of churches, but the possession of full-orbed truth. Most of our churches have become so tolerant of differing ideas within the church that no one has either to stay out of some existing church, or to form a new one, in order to be free to give ample expression to his convictions. I doubt if a single evangelical church could be found today all of whose members see eye to eye in doctrine. I doubt, indeed, if one could bring together twenty-five ministers of any evangelical denomination, all of whom think alike with reference either to doctrine or practice. There is plenty of room in our churches for differing ideas. Doctrines divide; tasks unite. Today our churches are emphasizing tasks; they are confronted with tremendous ones; and they need the active cooperation of every person who owns Christ as Master.

Tasks of the Church

One of the chief tasks of the church today is that of readjustment to changing social conditions. The modern world has seen manufacturing leave the home for the

factory. Great cities have sprung up like magic. Young people, leaving the farms and small towns, seek work in factories and offices. Rapid transportation and communication have massed population in great centers and divided them into classes. The few have become wealthy, while the many only earn a living. Multitudes, under the stress of overspeed during six days' work, claim the Sabbath for recreation. As our people have grown rich and wages have increased many have become lovers of pleasure and fall into self-indulgence instead of bearing the yoke of responsibility.

The church, consequently, must get out of the ruts of centuries and adjust itself to the changed structure of society or lose its power over men. This task of readjustment is the task of the young. It places every young Christian under special obligations to be loyal to the church and busy in it; and the clearest call is to the most gifted and the best trained. No others can accomplish the task. Not to see the great need, is to be blind to present conditions. To stand apart from the church and criticize, is to be untrue to Christ as his cause presents itself to our day.

While it is well and necessary to recognize defects, one in thinking of the church should place the emphasis on appreciation of excellencies. When others look at us, we want them to see, not only the scar on our face, but the light in our eyes. We should see in the church unity of spirit amidst diversified individual interests; the persistent purpose and endeavor to win men from sin and to make society better; the amount and excellence of self-sacrificing service—in teaching children, in preaching the gospel, in ministering to sick and needy, in caring for orphans, in establishing hospitals, in maintaining social centers, in mission work in all lands, in furnishing young men and women for Christian Associations the world around; in its great work through members who are philanthropists, reformers, temperance workers, and uplifters of society in a multitude of ways. Such facts should press home upon every thoughtful person the question of whether he will continue to stand aloof from the church, criticizing and doing nothing to help, or "get into the game," take his rightful responsibility, and do with his strength the utmost of his share.

Our Obligations to the Church

Every Christian young man has personal obligations to the church which are even more imperative than those already named:

1. The church is his spiritual mother. He was converted by the work of the church—by the love, prayers, and efforts to win him to Christ, which the church made possible. His home was environed and pervaded by church influences. His closest friends have had the good fortune of like church influences, and these friends have been powerful in his life. What he is in moral character and ethical ideas, he owes to the church.

2. One's spiritual life must be developed by the church. No phase of life develops in isolation. Home love is developed by home life, class spirit by class activity, companionableness by companionships, literary taste by literary friends, books, and societies. So also the church, with its multitude of activities, must be one's means of spiritual culture.

3. Every one is needed in the work of the church. In all big undertakings men work, not alone, but in cooperation. The

Sunday School is carried on, not by one, but by a group. The church is supported, both financially and in all its assemblies, not by one, but by many. The influence of a church in a community goes forth from a group of persons who are united in sympathy, purpose, and endeavor. Social service is a task too large for one; it requires united effort. Missions, both at home and abroad, is work needing an organization. In a sympathetic organization which undertakes great tasks there is not only room for, but great need of, ability of every kind, and in such an organization talents of every sort most readily find place and employment.

Team-work is needed in the church just as in the football game. The game is not won by standing on the side-lines and telling how it ought to be done, but by getting into the game, adjusting one's movements to other players, and all pushing together to put the ball across the goal. Even those on the side-lines must cheer if their team is to win. Christ's work is a team-work proposition. The first thing the Master did was to gather about him twelve disciples. Let no one think to live his Christian life

and do his Christian work apart from organization.

4. It may be safely said that no one today can make his greatest spiritual contribution to the world except through the church, or in closest sympathy and cooperation with it. One cannot do his best work except in sympathetic surroundings. Most of us have had experience of unsympathetic teachers who would not be pleased no matter what we did. Good work under such teachers is impossible. In an unsympathetic company thoughts will not flow, humor is dried up, fellowship is stagnant. An unsympathetic audience destroys a speaker's eloquence and stifles his resources. So also, only among those sympathetic with spiritual ideals and cooperating in spiritual projects is any Christian put at his best; only thus is the most developed within him and the most got out of him for the help of his fellows. Even Christ wrought few miracles, and taught only in dark sayings, where sympathy was lacking. On several occasions it is said of him, in explanation of the people's failure to receive his best: "And he did not many mighty works there, because of their unbelief" (Matt. 13 : 58).

The Record of the Church

No other institution in history has such a glorious record as the church. The heroism of Christ, a young man, sending forth a dozen young men to establish the rule of God in the hearts of men, is an act of faith and heroism to captivate the imagination and command the admiration of every young man of spirit.

In three hundred years the whole Mediterranean world was made nominally Christian. No difficulties, no oppositions, no persecutions daunted the lovers of Christ. They were burned at the stake, thrown to lions, gored by angered bulls, cast into loathsome dungeons, thrust through with the sword; but they forgave their persecutors and counted it an honor to die for the Saviour whom they loved; while on every hand those who witnessed their unhesitating response to the challenge of love, relinquished their idols and accepted Christ.

We look back in amazement at the heroic folly, as we think, of the hermits and Crusaders. Their folly, of course, was incident to the ideas of their day, but their heroism in answering the call of God as

they saw it will ever command the admiration of the world.

We no longer believe that society is inherently evil, and that it is necessary to go apart from it in order to be saved, as did the hermits; but the self-sacrificing heroism that denied self-indulgence, crucified natural desires, gave up friends and loved ones, and relinquished all worldly ambitions, stands out in glowing contrast with the easy-going indulgence of many in our time. A like heroism and sacrifice put into the tasks which constitute the challenge of our day to Christian men, instantly commands the admiration of every thoughtful person.

We no longer believe that it is important to rescue the "holy sepulcher" from "the infidel," as did the Crusaders; but when business and property are relinquished, as they were then, in order that one's self and one's money may be devoted to the cause of Christ as his cause presents itself in our day, the admiration of every one who seeks to uplift society is forthcoming.

Beyond all other institutions, the church has been the dispenser of charity. Its methods, of course, have not always been wise, but this fact is of wholly secondary

consequence. The heart to give, the disposition to uplift, the recognition of obligation, and the endeavor to promote brotherhood are the great things. Wise methods of administration are battered out of experience. Our day is one of organized charity. In this work the church takes a leading part, both by giving money and by friendly visitation. All charity workers recognize that the poor need friends quite as much as they need material aid. Throughout the centuries the charity of the church has been a luminous manifestation of the spirit of Christ.

The church has always championed the rights of the common man. In days when it was denied that women and slaves had souls, the church championed the dignity and worth of every individual. When slavery was common among all nations, the church insisted upon humane treatment, and commended those who liberated their slaves. Under the wage system the church has always championed a "square deal." In every century it has stood, according to the best light of the day, for truth, righteousness, and justice. It has refused to be discouraged, however great the discourage-

ments. In a little chapel in Wales, one Sabbath morning, the writer listened to an aged minister preaching to a congregation of forty people on "The Conquering Kingdom of Christ." The small congregation did not seem to represent large conquest, but the situation was typical of the unsubduable spirit of the church through all the centuries. Between the dozen men which Christ sent forth and the millions in the church today there have been many ups and downs—dark days and bright days; days when the church fell into ruts which made reformation necessary; days when in places it was swept into the clutch of economic interest, as in our own Southland during slavery; days when the power and furor of the State turned it from its proper mission, as in Germany; but the spirit of Christ, ever latent in the hearts of at least a few, prevailed in the end, and the Church continues to be the source and fountain of the world's spiritual life and power.

The Church at Present

At the present hour the church is holding up Jesus Christ to the world as the

Saviour of men and the Redeemer of society; and it is the only institution that is doing so. It insists that men should become like Christ in character, and that the principles of Christ should dominate human relationships. It teaches and preaches righteousness. It stands squarely against all immorality, both in private and public life. It is the only institution which makes the salvation of men and the promotion of righteousness its sole business. However much individual members may fall short of its ideals and teachings, the church in its organized capacity, and in the united efforts of its members, exalts Jesus Christ and works to promote godliness.

The church is the only organization that is working to give the knowledge of Christ to all peoples of the earth. Her missionaries are in every land. She has many arms and many busy hands—aid societies, charity organizations, Sunday Schools, social centers, missionary societies, Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations, besides many others; while the great majority of all leaders in every field of reform are at the same time active members of the church of Christ.

The Church and the World War

Much has been said about changes that would come to the church after the world war, and some have intimated that the church failed during the world's great crisis.

The Young Men's Christian Association, with other like organizations, and all army chaplains were the church of Christ at work to supply war needs. Churches also freely gave their pastors in order that they might serve where the need was greatest. Every church was a hive of industry, in its church building or elsewhere, helping to furnish what our soldier boys needed. No armies in the world were ever so well cared for morally and spiritually as the armies of the allied nations. Never in the history of war has such magnificent service been rendered, notwithstanding the suddenness of its demand and its staggering magnitude.

Now that the war is over, what readjustments in church life are our soldiers demanding? With gratitude we observe that they are returning to our churches thankful for the love and prayers that followed them into the jaws of death. Their letters to pastors and Y. M. C. A. workers express

deep appreciation of spiritual help and comfort. Thousands who began the Christian life in response to the gospel message in cantonments and on the war front, indicate Christ's power now as always to win and inspire strong men.

There is as yet no insistent demand for change in the church by our returning soldiers. Moreover, an institution that has been hundreds of years in building does not change either suddenly or rapidly. Its roots are too deep in the hearts of men; its threads of life are too intimately woven throughout the whole social fabric; it has accumulated too much wisdom from experience.

Yet changes will take place in the church, and they ought to come. The experiences of our Christian soldiers will accelerate changes that were already begun before they went to war.

Some old methods of religious expression and church activity will wear themselves out and disappear. The Methodist class-meeting is already a thing of the past. The midweek prayer-meeting in many places does not serve the purpose it once did and is no longer supported as formerly. The

preaching of Christ still attracts, holds, and interests more hearers, and does it oftener, than any other serious subject which brings men together in assembly. But there is falling off in attendance at church, and the evening service suffers most. In numerous places it has been discontinued. Evangelistic services are not generally in favor as formerly. That is, the methods of church activity which originated in other days must evidently undergo readjustment to meet the changed conditions of our day. This we all feel. Our boys felt it before they went to war.

New methods of church life and work will doubtless develop in line with present social emphasis, an emphasis which war conditions greatly accentuated. The keynote of the whole war situation was *service*. The demand upon Christianity was that it help some one, that it sacrifice, that it lay down life where needed. This is the social emphasis raised to the *n*th power. In the intensity of the situation it seemed to be the whole of religion. Men felt that all else of religious character must help men to gird themselves for sacrifice.

This emphasis on self-sacrificing social

service our boys have brought back from the war. It is the emphasis of our century intensified by war conditions, and magnified and glorified because enshrined in the hearts of the most virile and forward-looking young men of the nation.

Such men do not hastily turn from the church or lightly discard old forms with which they are familiar. But they will not remain satisfied with old forms and methods. New life takes on new forms and expresses itself in new ways.

One may not say beforehand what the changes will be. Naturally the first attempts at improvement will follow the lines of Christian Association work, which was so helpful to the soldiers in the time of their need. But the new emphasis will determine its own forms and methods as it proceeds, battering them out of experiences of success and failure in the endeavor to bring Jesus Christ into vital relations with men.

Whatever changes may come to the church, it must never be forgotten that the supreme need of the world is vital union with Jesus Christ. This is the condition of advancing civilization. No changes in the church will avail for the betterment of men

which do not accentuate this fact, and no methods of Christian work and service will be an improvement on present ones unless they are more effective in bringing men face to face with Christ as Lord and Master.

Wherein is our civilization ahead of that of Egypt, Babylon, Assyria, ancient Greece, or Rome? Where can you go in history to find grosser savagery than was exhibited in the world war, and in rebellions in Russia and Germany since the war—the murder of non-combatants, the slaughter of children, the violation of women, the abuse, torture, and starvation of prisoners, the ruthless pillage, the wanton destruction of property, the bitterness and hate?

We have boasted of progress in science and invention, and called it advancing civilization. The war has made apparent the fact that the only real advancement is progress in manhood, that real civilization consists in building a finer type of the human species. All else may be but the perfecting of instruments of misery, destruction, and death.

Science, we say, has decreased the burden of work in the world. But leisure is not

an unmixed blessing unless those enjoying it be of such character as to use it profitably; and work is a necessary condition of physical and moral development. As great evils may come from too much leisure as from too crushing toil.

Science and invention have given the world increased comforts and luxuries. But comforts and luxuries are often the cause of moral deterioration. Children reared in luxury are not better than children inured to toil. Those who grow rapidly rich are not made better thereby.

Science has overcome many diseases. But modern industrial conditions and the intensity of modern life are responsible for many diseases. Heart-failure and nerve-fag are increasing. Trade diseases, caused by dust and poisons, are numerous, and industrial accidents cause no end of poverty, suffering, and sorrow.

Real progress consists in advancing manhood, and scientific knowledge and methods are of advantage in proportion as we produce men who make them a blessing. In a word, they are of advantage in proportion as men have the Christian view-point, spirit, and purpose.

Never has it been so evident that the world needs Jesus Christ and that its progress is hopeless without him. The only permanent advancement that civilization is making is progress in Christlikeness.

Whatever changes may come to the church, they will fail of advantage unless they reveal Christ to the apprehension of the people and persuade them to accept him as Saviour and Lord.

It is well to promote athletics, to furnish amusements, to provide facilities for social life, to conduct night-schools, to open labor bureaus, and to promote many other social and economic ministries; but unless they are the media through which men catch Christ's spirit and discern his love, so that they are brought into vital relations with him, all our modern methods will be but futile playing at the world's great task. The world needs Christ.

IX

Cooperating with God

COOPERATING WITH GOD

I

MODERN democracies must be made up of spiritual men who are keyed to lofty purposes. Present conditions and future outlook challenge every serious-minded person to rise to the divinest that is in him. The times call for men with high ideals, with faith in God, and who are willing to work with God to make a better world.

Constructive thought is demanded, and immediacy and vigor of action are imperative. It is not enough to criticize past and present institutions, even though criticism be just and needed. We must build better institutions, ever looking toward an ampler future in which there shall be less need to criticize. Criticism of one's self, of course, is a sign of growth. One lives to little purpose who is not wiser today than he was yesterday. Criticism of others also is beneficial when given with a desire to help, and especially when we have had experi-

ence of the things criticized; but criticism at best is a thankless task, and one of doubtful utility unless one also shows "a more excellent way."

It is good to criticize the church, for the church, like all institutions run by human beings, can be improved. But the reasons for criticism ought to be to destroy the church if it makes men worse, or to improve the church and make it a more powerful instrument for making men better.

It is proper to criticize the Bible, but surely the criticism ought to be in the spirit of helpfulness. One could admire intelligent criticism of the Bible from one who sincerely thought that the Bible did harm, or from one who believed that he could improve the Bible as a religious guide, or from one who had found another book which would do the work better. But criticism without clear ideas, definite purpose, or generous motive, bespeaks thoughtlessness, and indifference to the spiritual needs of man.

It is always necessary and proper to tear down an old building *if it is really dangerous,* or if it serve no good purpose, or when a new and better structure is to be erected

in its place. But unless the new building is to be constructed, it is certainly best to let the old stand. It will shelter some from the cold and the dark even though it be old.

II

Suppose that one cannot connect himself with any existing religious institution, or get at his religious life problem in any of the ways suggested in the foregoing chapters:

1. One is dissatisfied with the church. Let him forget the church. Call it a man-made institution. It has always changed; it is changing rapidly at present; it will change more in the years ahead. Each of us would have his life to live, his possibilities to realize, and a worth-while work to do in the world if the church had never existed.

2. One has trouble with the Bible. Very well. Forget the Bible if no help is found in it. Call it the record of God's dealings with men in other days, or what men thought was God's dealings with them. One has his life to live, his bit to do for the social good, and this would be the case had the Bible never been written.

3. One fails to understand Jesus Christ. Very well. Forget Christ if he furnishes no strength to moral purposes and no inspiration for high endeavor. One still has his life to live, his burdens to bear, his sins to be forgiven, his temptations to overcome, his powers to use, his fellow men to help.

4. One finds fault with people. They are human like one's self, and they are doubtless more conscious of their faults and sins than anybody else.

What then? Is life to be spent in quarreling with things and people? in criticizing historic beliefs and customs? and in condemning present institutions? Is one not to put in his oar and have part in the rowing when the whole complicated process of making one's own and everybody's life more worth living is an up-stream task, requiring every willing hand at the oars?

III

It is possible, in the face of all difficulties, to secure an effective starting-point for one's religious life by beginning where one is and *cooperating with God* according to one's light and opportunity. You believe in God, though he may be vague to you.

You have a spiritual nature which feels a kinship to God and longs to know him better. Then *cooperate* with God according to your best judgment, and grant the willing response of your spiritual nature as far as it is developed. This is reducing religion to its lowest terms; but surely the simplest and most apparent fact to any man in earnest is that he ought to *cooperate with God*. He ought not to work against him or be indifferent to his desires. To *cooperate with God* according to one's light is the least that a true-hearted man can do, and it is in fact the most that any man can do.

To what tasks this cooperation will lead one, depends on many things—on the intensity of one's spiritual nature; on home, school, and social training; on moral standards; on social and economic ideas; and on the needs and opportunities of one's present sphere of influence. But to *cooperate with God* according to one's honest convictions is the most apparent duty of every man. Less than this will not satisfy either one's intelligence or one's feelings, to say nothing of one's convictions of the highest life and the most helpful service. *Cooperating*

with God according to present light will bring more light; it will lead to conscious fellowship with God in work; it will start one's spiritual nature into healthy and vigorous growth; and it will keep one busy with the things that are most worth while.

IV

The question now arises, What does God want? In what tasks may one cooperate with him?

1. *Surely God wants men to be pure in life.* Here is an immediate task for every man, a task sufficiently definite, and one that is ever present. Its importance cannot be overemphasized. It affects individual life, family life, social life, and industrial life; it concerns the number of children born diseased, malformed, deaf, dumb, blind, feeble-minded, or with tendencies to epilepsy, insanity, or criminality; it affects the happiness or unhappiness of homes; it brings the bloom or blight to innumerable lives. Here is a task calling for the immediate activity and hardest fighting of every manly man.

One's application to this great task takes very definite form. It begins with one's

self—the cleanness of one's own life, the purity of one's own heart, the chasteness of one's own thoughts. It has to do with the character of the pictures on one's walls, the nature of the stories one tells or hears. It challenges one's respect for manhood and womanhood, for motherhood and babyhood, for sisterhood and brotherhood, for life at its very source and in its holiest functions. Response to this sacred challenge constitutes the supreme test of many a man's honor and heroism.

But the task of pure living is not simply one's own. Each of us helps or hinders others in their fight. During the war we prayed that our soldier boys might be kept pure amidst the temptations of camp life. The author had a number of personal friends in our training-camps. He prayed, not only that they might be kept pure, but that, reenforced as they were by good homes, good training, good associates, the confidence of friends, and the assistance of God, they might be towers of strength to others, and help to keep pure those less gifted and less fortunate than themselves.

We help ourselves most by helping others—provided always that we do not

help others for the purpose of helping ourselves. Jesus says: "He that loseth his life shall save it." He gets warm quickest who helps to warm another; he fights best for himself who fights another's battles; he grows strong who helps the weak; he strengthens his own footing who holds another up.

2. *Surely God wants men to be honest*—honest with themselves, with their fellows, and with him. A group of men who were producing a morality code for grade and high-school pupils, sent a questionnaire to a large number of teachers, asking what ought to be put into it. "Put honesty into the code," the great majority of them replied. Children are not far advanced in education before they are willing to take something for nothing. It is not a far cry from *willingness* to take something for nothing to *striving to get* something for nothing. The "gold-brick" element comes to pervade the whole of life. People want good health without paying the price; they want cultured minds without being at cost; they want spiritual life and eternal life without sacrifice and effort. The great need in work, trade, commerce, social relations, and

spiritual life, is simply honesty—a sense of honor that is unwilling to take something for nothing. There is a deep sense in which a man cannot possess what he has not earned and paid for in terms of expenditure of life. Social health, economic soundness, and right individual character, cannot rest on deceit, fraud, or injustice. *God wants honest men.*

But the task of securing honesty, both in ourselves and others, is so difficult, and must be so long continued, that no man is adequate, even to do his bit, without faith that God works with him. Conscious cooperation with God is imperative if one would work undismayed on a task so large.

The first duty of a man who would help to make a more honest world is squarely to face his own soul and demand of himself absolute honesty with his God. This is the only possible basis of cooperation with God in any task.

3. *Surely God wants brotherly men.* Our world war was between autocracy and democracy, between those who would rule and those who would share, between nations schooled in hate and those schooled in brotherhood, between those who repudiated

national morality and those who advocated it, between those who disavowed Christian principles and those who stood by them, between those who would rule by brute force and those who championed the rights of the weak.

The dividing-line seen in the war runs through all government, business, social, and individual life. Shall the powerful in government rule the people for their own profit or for the advantage of those ruled, as an older and abler brother might rule a younger brother? Shall the strong in business crush the weak or organize business for the benefit and comfort of all? Shall the more fortunate and gifted in society look down upon the less fortunate and less gifted, or value the weak as Christ valued them, holding all in a spirit of human fellowship, and furnishing to all the uplift and inspiration of brotherly love? Shall the individual go forth into life to get or to give? Shall he make his work first and his pay incidental or his pay first and his work incidental? Shall what he is to his friends be first and what he gets from them second, or shall he place first what he gets and make what he gives contingent on that?

In a word, shall one's ambition and endeavor be to bless or to be blessed? Shall one not give of himself, of the very best that is in him, remembering that "there is that giveth and yet increaseth, and there is that witholdeth, but it tendeth only to poverty." Life grows rich by spending.

To make the world "safe for democracy," and to make spiritualized democracy safe for the world, simply means to build men into brotherhood. It is a tremendous task; but surely it is God's will; and every earnest, forward-looking man ought to be busy with God working on the job.

4. *Surely God wants redeeming men.* This means brotherhood raised to the highest power. It means the strong bearing the burdens of the weak. As long as strength simply serves itself the weak will be crushed. As long as quick wits are selfish, slow wits will be outclassed and exploited. What is strength for? How is it to be used? Until strength is used to serve—to uplift the fallen, to sustain the weak, to rescue those in danger, to instruct the ignorant, to guard the foolish from folly, and to save the sinning, we shall have a selfish, cruel, exploiting world; we shall never be

out of hearing of the suffering and hungry; we shall look upon the poorly clad, ill-housed, and diseased; we shall be in company with the sinning, hopeless, and despairing. *God wants redeeming men,* men who see needs and have hearts to help, men who are aware of suffering, folly, and sin in others, and who care. Is this not the meaning of the fact that "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son"? Is this not the spirit of Christ as he lived among men? Is this not the inner soul of religion and the highest and holiest task of every man? To serve one's fellows according to one's light and opportunity, to be at cost for others, to suffer and rejoice with them and for them, to bring to others the spiritual health of a life that believes and loves and cares and hopes and trusts, in order that they also may take courage and be braver and stronger—this is the one task supremely worthy of the enlistment of all the powers of a man; but it is a task so high, so difficult, and yet so needed, that he who undertakes it must be linked with God, and consciously cooperate with him. God always calls men to heroic tasks, but he always works with them.

v

One's own heart is the measure of one's opportunity. The opportunity is as large or as small as the heart. A group of young people were gathered about a painting intended to represent a girl coming home from church. A church building was in the background of the picture, and in the foreground, the girl with her Bible walking toward the beholders. The young people were remarking that she had been to church, when a minister of the writer's acquaintance, a man of keen artistic sense and of searching spiritual discernment, who was looking over the heads of the group, said: "She has not been to church; she has been somewhere else."

A well-known artist who related the incident to the author, said: "I made careful inquiry into the character of the artist who painted 'The Girl Coming Home from Church,' and learned to my surprise that he was an unmitigated villain. He could not paint a girl coming home from church. There was no church in his heart." Then continuing, the artist said, "I made up my mind when I began to paint that if I were

ever to become a painter, I must begin in the middle of my own heart."

"As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." "Out of the heart are the issues of life." No painter can put on canvas, and no man can put into life, what is not first in his own heart. Here is the place for each of us to begin—within our own hearts. Before we can cooperate with God we must get right with God. We live in rushing times, when men are hard pressed with clamorous temptations. Men are needed who are right with God, and who, because right with God, are towers of strength and cities of refuge to those about them. People are influenced, not by theories and theologies and philosophies, but *by men*. The right kind of men persuade and inspire others to do right. Every one stands in the center of a circle of opportunities influencing lives on every hand. When we are right with God God works with us, our circle of opportunities enlarges, and our power and usefulness increase. The measure of a man is his work.

Speaking of the world war when the food conservation campaign was on, "The Continent" said: "We are all in it. For

each man the general duty sharpens down to a point which thrusts into his own life. Nor can it be escaped by an easy sense of the corporate duty. Calculating the minimum which each person should accomplish, on the supposition that every other person will do that same minimum, is idle. Saving such a fraction of an ounce of butter each week, or reducing by such a petty measure the use of meat or wheat, is only an appeal to the latent selfishness of the nation. It really seems to signify that the war can be accomplished without any great sacrifice from anybody. But if the experience of the other warring nations is a guide, that is a grave error. Nothing but cutting sacrifice will do what the world needs now. Nothing but a sharpened sense of *individual responsibility* will carry the nation safely through this crisis. There is no hope from men who are still seeking their slothful ease, resenting intrusion of calls for aid. Men who snarl when more money, or more time, or more labor is called for in this crisis are no help but a hindrance. . .

"'In peaceful times,' said a soldier in General Pershing's army in France, 'the soldier, like any other normal person, is

jealous of his " rights." He will raise more disturbance over being called on for extra duty out of his turn than most any other person on earth. But I have noticed lately very little of that sort of thing. The attitude of most is to do as much as one can, to learn one's duties better than Jim Jones and Sam Smith, and then do those duties better still. It is all due to the fact that they are beginning to realize *a sense of personal responsibility* in the struggles that are to come. *The falling short of one may mean disaster to many.' . .*

" A few men are actually interpreting this war in terms of personal advantage, only a few out of the total. But a multitude of men are still thinking of it as somebody else's affair. Since they are not called to the actual bearing of arms, they shake off all sense of duty. Meanwhile, there is a growing multitude who are seeking with deep earnestness to meet the crisis as a personal one, making financial and personal sacrifices in its behalf, bearing it as a personal burden, expecting to give account of their faithfulness to God."

Surely the case could not be better stated for the religious life. The battle that is

on for righteousness is unspeakably more important than the world war. Indeed, the war was a part of the battle for righteousness in human relations. Had the battle for righteousness been adequately fought there would have been no war. Every man is needed in the fight. Slackers do not help win battles. Each one must be responsible for his bit.

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